



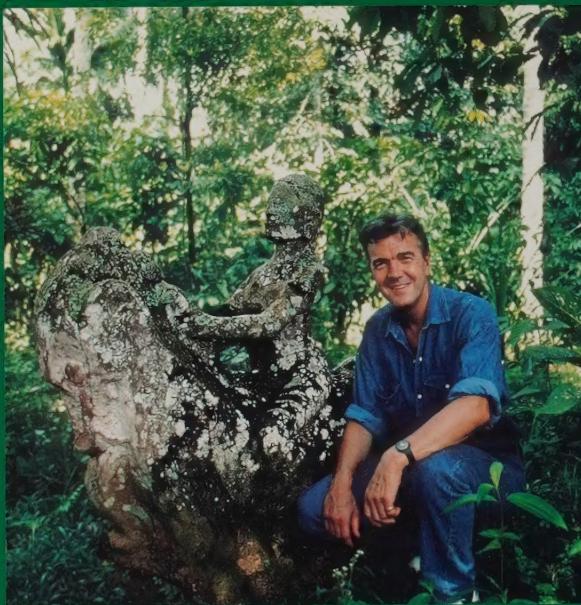
JEAN PAUL BARBIER-MUELLER

IN NORTH SUMATRA,
AN UNKNOWN GROUP

THE KALASAN BATAK



FONDATION CULTURELLE
MUSÉE BARBIER-MUELLER



Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller was born in Geneva in 1930. He studied law in his native city and history in London. With his wife, he reorganized, refined, and greatly augmented the non-Western art collections (African, Oceanic, Pre-Columbian, etc.) constituted by his father-in-law, Josef Mueller, beginning in 1908. Above all, between 1925 and 1939, while living in Paris, Josef Mueller assembled a fine set of African works. The family collections now number 6,300 inventoried items. In 1977 the author opened a museum of world cultures in Geneva, and in 1997, a Pre-Columbian art museum in Barcelona, in a palace lent to it by that city. Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller has always focused on itinerant exhibitions held throughout the world, accompanied by catalogues edited by the best specialists. In addition, in 2011 *Tribal Art* awarded a special prize to the Barbier-Mueller Museum for the entirety of its some ninety art books. In 2010 the author created the Foundation that is publishing the present volume, in association with the prestigious watch manufacturer Vacheron Constantin. In this book Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller provides us with the sum total of his observations, made during some fifteen journeys in North Sumatra, especially among the Toba Batak. He discovered there a small group of around six thousand people, the Kalasan Batak, who had never been studied.

IN NORTH SUMATRA,
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Mejan of the Marban Banjar marga in Huta Buluampa. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

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MUSÉE BARBIER-MUELLER

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VACHERON CONSTANTIN

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Rice fields in Huta Pangaloan, Toba country. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Preface





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An Unexpected Book...

The aim of the Cultural Foundation of the Barbier-Mueller Museum, set up with the financial backing of the watch manufacturer Vacheron Constantin of Geneva, is to support two international anthropological missions a year among peoples whose traditions are threatened. These investigations are carried out by established ethnologists but also by young doctoral students or postdoctoral fellows. The members of the Board of the Foundation and the fifteen specialists constituting the Scientific Committee have expressed their preference for financing, as a matter of priority, students seeking to complete their theses.

Since spring 2011, we have sent three candidates into the field: Antje Denner, who has just earned her doctorate, went to Anir Island in New Ireland; Timour Claquin, a doctoral student, will be working until March 2012 among the Garo Songsarek in the state of Meghalaya, India; and Guigone Camus, also a doctoral student, is currently doing her research on Tabiteuea, one of the Gilbert Islands. Clearly, these researchers, respectively from German, Bengali and French origin, are not yet ready to present the fruit of their work. The results of the first investigation, on Anir Island, will not be published until the end of this year, while the others will appear only in 2012. Since our by-laws stipulate the publication of two books a year, we were in the position of being unable to honour our commitments.

In agreement with the members of the Scientific Committee, I took the liberty of asking Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller to publish the results of his research from Sumatra. Between 1974 and 1998, he had continually surveyed the regions of Batak country most remote from tourism and had discovered a small, little-known group, the Pakpak Kalasan. He happily agreed to put to use, for the Foundation's benefit, the information and documents he had collected during his many visits.

Until now, the Kalasan have never been the object of a study and are not mentioned by specialists on the Batak. As the reader will discover, these Kalasan Batak create rather extraordinary stone statues depicting famous individuals, known for their bravery or their talents as magicians.

Let me conclude by thanking Juan-Carlos Torres, president of Vacheron Constantin, whose interest in transmitting cultural heritages led to his desire to save what remains of the oral traditions of small, vanishing groups. Because of him and his instincts, the Cultural Foundation was able to see the light of day. Thanks as well to the members of our Scientific Committee, which includes the biggest names in contemporary ethnology, from Germany to Australia. May they all know how profoundly grateful we are to them.

Laurence Mattet
Director

Pangulubalang of the Siregar marga in Huta Balianguru II, Toba country. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Foreword



I became acquainted with Batak country in 1974; I was not captivated by some fertile, equatorial landscape reminiscent of paintings by Le Douanier Rousseau. Lake Toba, dark and often troubled by storms, lies encircled by hills carpeted with short green grass and dotted with a few bushes. Everywhere, masses of rock attest to a violent volcanic past. The valleys separating mountains that rise to two or three thousand metres have long been stripped of the primal forest that used to cover them and

have been turned into rice fields. Unlike those of Bali and the Philippines, these are not arranged into spectacular terraces. In short, the only remarkable things are the traditional Toba houses. In the 1970s, all the villages between Balige, south of the lake, and the small tourist spot of Parapat were intact. It was a magnificent scene. That sense of grandeur, of the richness of decoration that holds human beings in thrall (as the ancient Lascaux caves attest), had reached astonishing dimensions among the Toba Batak.

Fig. 1a Former house of Raja Pardoling, also known as Doli Situmorang, in 1978, demolished in 1980. Hamlet of Pagar Bolak, at the foot of Pagar Batu Hill. The decrepit roof is supported by an oblique beam. abm—archives barbier-muelier. Photo by the author, 1978.



Unfortunately, to construct such buildings and to maintain them, a community moved by faith had to undertake the labour, the houses being a miniature reproduction of the cosmos as conceived by the ancient *ugamo perbegu* religion. It is estimated that five hundred people set to work to cut down distant trees, bring them to the site, fit boards and beams together using mortise and tenon construction, cover the tall roof with fibres (*ijuk*) from the trunks of sugar palms, and then decorate the façades with carvings and paintings.

Fig. 1b Doli Situmorang's new house, built at the same location in 1980. Note the large stone in front, which was not moved. abm—archives barbier-muelier. Photo by the author, 1980.



Fig. 2a *Singa* on the façade of Muda Sitorus' house in Lumban na Bolok, Sitorus marga (Uluan). abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1980.

By the late 1980s, houses beyond repair had already been destroyed (figs 1a–b).

Elsewhere, government employees used the introduction of electricity to the hamlets as a pretext to claim that the electricity meter had to be placed in the same spot as one of the monster (*singa*) heads on the façade, at the end of the long *pardingdingan*, or beam, supporting the inhabitable part of the house. This beam is a representation of the cosmic serpent Naga Padoha that bears on its back the Middle World, the dwelling place for humankind (*manisia*) (figs 2a–b).

With the help of Vice-President Adam Malik and his cabinet director, Mr Adhyatman, I had come up with a plan to transport intact an entire village to Parapat. The project was well under way when Vice-President Malik died suddenly of cancer. After that, the door to the governor of North Sumatra province was closed to me. I understand the political concerns of the Muslim government of Jakarta: federating a nation scattered over thousands of islands is no easy task, especially when some Christians in the Moluccas, and, more militantly, the Muslims from the former sultanate of Aceh (neighbouring the Batak) have demanded their independence. Anything that might look like nationalism on the part of an ethnic group was discouraged in every possible way. On the overall balance sheet, the survival of the traditional Batak or Toraja houses did not count for much, nor did the protests of the Dayak of Borneo, who were expelled from their villages and relocated to the coast, though they



Fig. 2b This view of the same house in Lumban na Bolok, taken seven years later, shows that the *singa* sculpture has disappeared. The village was supplied with electricity and a meter was carelessly attached to a decorated frieze. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.

are not fishermen, to allow large companies to clear the forest.

Another magnificent feature, immediately remarked upon by travellers, tourists and Dutch scholars, are the "funerary" stone monuments of the Toba, foremost among them the large bone sarcophagi, the most famous being the one in Tomok on the Samosir Peninsula. Until recently, it was protected by an enormous sacred fig tree, which prevented rain damage. Its owners

felt obliged to improve the site for the many visitors coming from Parapat on the opposite bank. They cut down the tree and built a wall made of gaudily coloured earthenware tiles to mark off a zone that you enter only after buying a ticket. Over thirty years, other sarcophagi have been so damaged by the elements (figs 3a–b) that one shudders to think of the future of this superb sculpture ...

Fig. 3a In February 1980, the author discovered the most ancient sarcophagus known, north-west of Samosir Island, on a plateau overlooking the village of Si Tungkir. The bones of several chieftains from the Sihaloho *marga* lie in the casket. In 1980 the lid bore the representation of a lizard. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1980.



Fig. 3b Thirty years later, Helder Da Silva took a photograph of the back of the same sarcophagus. It requires no comment. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



The magnificent villages and stone sarcophagi have fascinated specialists, but I know of no one since World War II who has been curious enough to set out on the small roads and trails in the vast area between Lake Toba and the Indian Ocean. Everyone has shown us the remains of the ancient tradition east of Lake Toba, sprinkled with explanations from the two major authors, Johannes Gustav Warneck and Johannes Winkler. These men lived through the Dutch colonial power's destruction of the civilization of the various Batak groups, beginning in 1907, when the military and religious leader Si Singamangaraja died in battle.

In a Pakpak enclave in Toba country not far from Dolok Sanggul, I found the Kalasan, a small group claiming to be independent and who practise the cremation of bones rather than their transfer to a sarcophagus or stone urn. These Kalasan, imitating their neighbours to the north, the Pakpak Simsim, followed the teachings of a sage from India, who had commanded the preservation of the ashes in an urn and its placement in front of a sculpture portraying the deceased astride a quadruped. The Kalasan chose to grant that creature the identity of the *singa*, a personification of Naga Padoha, god of the Lower World charged with bearing humankind on its back, and of the raja, the embodiment of the people. *Raja* is a Sanskrit word meaning "king", pompously conferred on village chieftains, the villages being independent political entities.

I have already said something about the Kalasan in an essay called "Batak Monuments: In the Shade of the Petrified Ancestors",

which appeared between a chapter on Nias and one on Sumba in my *Messages in Stone*.¹ Before writing the present book, I first took care to send a photographer, Helder Da Silva, to Sumatra, to examine the monuments, which I had not seen for more than ten years. The faithful Anthony Pardede, my Toba language instructor, guide, and eyes and ears since 1978, accompanied him. With a few exceptions, what they discovered was catastrophic.

It is my hope that this little book, which will be followed in 2012 by a report on the Western Karo, subsequent to the discovery that they possessed a cosmogony similar to that of the Toba, will cast a somewhat different light on the "Batak world". It merely continues the research of Frederic Martin Schnitger, which no one before now has followed up.

Notes

1. Barbier-Mueller, *Messages in Stone*, 1999, English- and German-language editions.

Village of Simanindo, now a "museum" in Samosir. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Introduction



INTRODUCTION

Several groups from the province (*provinsi*) of North Sumatra (Sumatera Utara), representing about five million individuals, claim to belong to the Batak people¹ a member of the large Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) linguistic family. The best known and the most numerous are the Toba Batak, who settled around the western, south-eastern, and southern banks of Lake Toba, and on the peninsula of Samosir, which became an island when the Dutch colonial administration dug a canal through the thin strip of land attaching it to the bank at the foot of the Pusuk Buhit volcano (fig. 4), on whose slopes the founding ancestors built the

original village, Sianjur Mulamula.

At an already early date, the Toba Batak restricted the dimensions of their villages (*huta* or *lumban*) by means of a rectangular protecting wall (*parik*)—a talus planted with thorny bamboo (*bulu suga*)—whose one narrow entrance (*bahal*) was provided with a chicane. On rare occasions, the *parik* is made of large stones (fig. 6) and the *bahal* is an impressive gate of large, loosely fitted blocks (fig. 5). When young couples could no longer find a place to live, they set off to found a new village, a *sosor*. If the founder selected a place close to the “mother village”, the *sosor* would be politically subordinate to it. Sometimes, however, adventurous young people went off in search of more distant, not-yet-populated lands. They kept the name of the clan (*marga*) to which they

Fig. 4 Lake Toba seen from the hills of Harianboho. In the background, the sacred Pusuk Buhit mountain. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1996.



belonged, until the lineage (*saompu*) descending from the prestigious founder became numerous enough to hold a great feast and proclaim its independence, generally adopting the name of the ancestor of the lineage as that of their new *marga*. Everything depended on the elevation of the founder's soul in the hierarchy of the Hereafter.

Every living man, woman, child, animal, and even trees and plants had a soul called *tondi*. Upon the death, the *tondi* flew back to the Upper World. Another soul made its appearance, the *begu* called "the soul of the dead" (*tondi ni na mate*). After only a few years, the souls (*begu*) of certain people, by virtue of the importance they had enjoyed on earth, automatically became *sumangot*, the second



Fig. 5 Entrance (*bahal*) through the *parik* (the fortified stone wall surrounding some Toba villages). Lumban Pangaloan. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1996.

Fig. 6 *Parik*. Huta Aek Matana. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1996.



degree in the Other World's hierarchy. No celebration marked that advancement. The soul of a village chieftain who had possessed both wealth and knowledge of magic was even called *sumangot* immediately after his death. The third and final degree (*sombaon*) was attained only by the souls of rajas who had founded lineages, who were still remembered, and who had had enough descendants to form a new *marga*.

The regular expansion of the Toba group led to the occupation, first, of the Silindung Valley to the south, and then of a part of Asahan, which is now a different regency (*kabupaten*). The region between Lake Toba and the Indian Ocean (here called the Upper Barus and Lower Barus) seems to have been populated later. The inhabitants of the coastal fringe of the ocean, bordered by the cordillera of the Barisan Mountains, appear to have been the last to arrive, between the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, according to the genealogies I was able to gather.

In terms of the genealogies, which made it possible to date the funerary monuments and sculptures, my work as a historian relied especially on a survey done in the last quarter of the twentieth century of dozens of elderly Toba, who knew their genealogies by heart. I took care to collate their responses with those of members of the same *marga* in other villages in the same region. Before that undertaking, I had read a large number of articles and books, especially by German missionaries. I focused on two remarkable works. The first was written in Toba by a Toba, Waldemar Hoetagaloeng (which is to say, Hutagalung), a functionary in the Dutch administration. Published in 1926, it is a census of all the Toba *marga* and indicates the places that

they, and the *marga* that had separated from them following the usual procedure, occupied at the time or still occupy. The second is by a lawyer, Jacob Cornelis Vergouwen, who was sent by the Netherlands in 1926 to bring Toba customary law (*adat*), which the Toba applied by following the directives given in the *uhum*, roughly equivalent to the application decrees of European laws in line with Dutch law. If you wish to consult only one book, written by someone who still knew Batak who had been born animists and who, in fact, still were so in the 1930s, that is certainly the one to choose.

In some situations, I have been obliged to consider two neighbouring groups of Toba: the Pakpak and, less often, the Karo. The Pakpak and Karo call themselves Batak, refusing (especially in the case of the Karo) to acknowledge Si Raja Batak, a key figure in the Toba creation myth, as their mythic ancestor. Only the Toba revealed their very rich mythology to the German missionaries. They addressed prayers to their various gods, while reserving their most devoted attention for the souls of ancestors, to which offerings and animal sacrifices were made.

The Karo Batak, who also venerate ancestral souls, deny they are the descendants of Si Raja Batak, primarily so that they will not be considered inferior to them (they are four times less numerous but were undoubtedly better horse breeders, and as a result wealthier than their neighbours to the south). Their language is intelligible to their neighbours, constituting in a sense an intermediate stage between Toba and Malay, which (with a few adjustments) became the official language of Indonesia when the country won its independence after Second

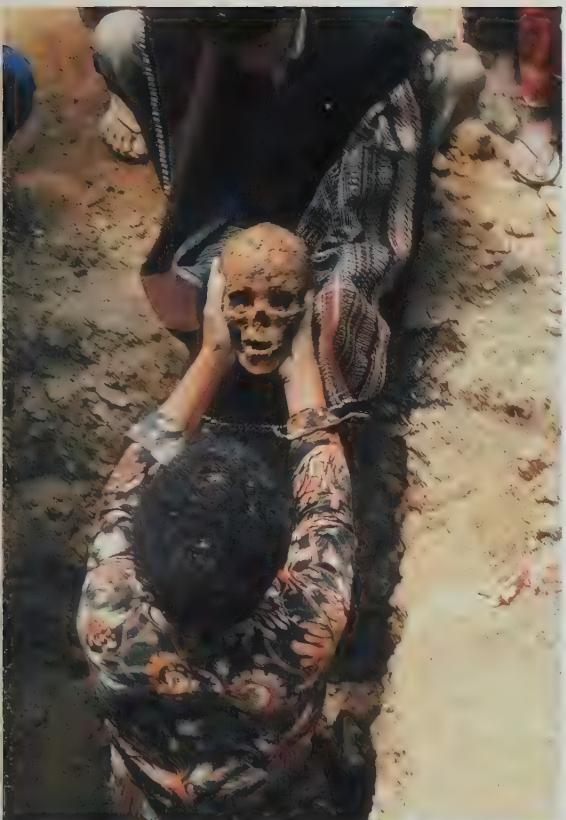


Fig. 7 Transfer of bones in Huta Julu. Photo Doris Gröpper, 1981.

World War. That official language was rebaptized “*Bahasa Indonesia*”, so as to owe nothing to Malaya.

The Pakpak Batak are linguistically and culturally quite similar to the Karo (see map, p. 36). They are divided into five subgroups: the Boan, Pegagan, Kepas, Simsim and Kalasan. Of these, one small subgroup—the Kalasan—has up to now escaped the attention of researchers.²

The Kalasan are represented by six clans (*marga*, or *merga* for the other Pakpak), five of which (the Marbun-Sehun being the exception) were founded by young Toba who had fled their families following family quarrels. Near the beginning of the sixteenth century³ they settled on a plain closed off to the north by a chain of mountains separating them from the Pakpak



Fig. 8 Cleaning of the skulls in Huta Julu. Photo Doris Gröpper, 1981.

group generally considered the most southern, the Simsim (see maps, pp. 24, 36, 37).

Perhaps a century after their arrival in the region, for which Parlilitan serves as the centre, a sage from India, Guru Pandia Mpu Kalasan (his name varies depending on the region) taught the Simsim to burn, not the bodies of the dead but their bones, which had been buried in the ground until all the flesh was gone. He then went among the Kalasan, who were quick to follow his teachings. The Toba, by contrast, unearth these bones, wash them, then deposit the skull (figs 7, 8, 90 and pp. 110–11) and the long bones in a sarcophagus (fig. 9) or stone urn (fig. 10), enormous in either case, since the descendants of the powerful individual for whom that monument is carved will join him there after they

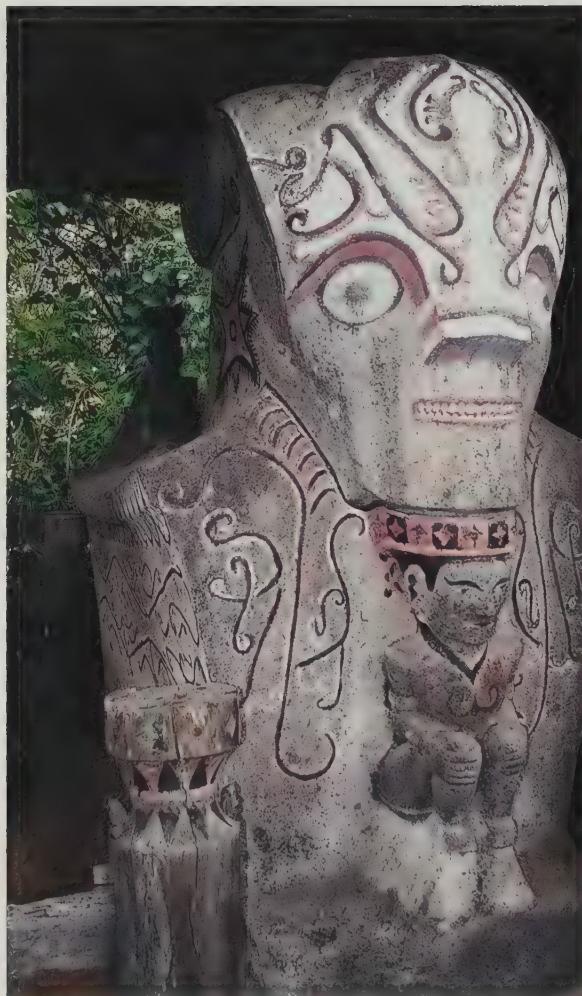


Fig. 9

die.⁴ These receptacles are called *parholian* (*holi* means "bone", *holi holi* "bones of the dead").

After Guru Kalasan induced a few Toba in the vicinity of Parlilitan to adopt the practice of burning bones, these Toba took the name of the Indian guru. Henceforth, they placed in small stone urns the ashes of their great men who had died. Guru Kalasan also ordered them to carve statues in the likeness of the dead man, astride "a horse or elephant". They respected that injunction, while choosing to give the mount, a quadruped, the head of the

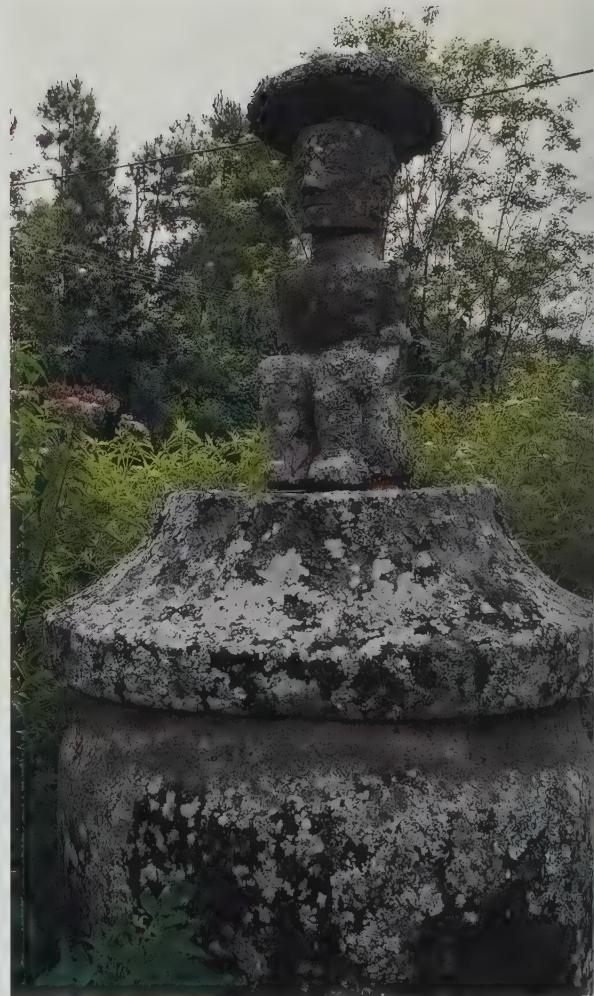


Fig. 10

singa, a buffalo-serpent with a bizarre face, bearing horns and a coiled tongue (fig. 11), which evokes the god Naga Padoha, lord of the Underworld. Naga Padoha, the cosmic serpent or buffalo has the task of bearing on his back the earth, where human beings live, of authorizing graves to be dug in his realm (underground), and also of conveying the souls of the dead to their dwelling place in the Hereafter. According to certain informants, however, it is only the souls of the "great ancestors", the *sombaon*, that Naga Padoha supposedly escorts.

**Fig. 11**

How is it that the Kalasan have remained unknown? The map published by Johannes Gustav Warneck in 1912 (fig. 12) clearly shows that the territory of the Kalasan remained untouched by any branch established by the Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft. The German missionaries knew nothing of them. In 1926 Hoetagaloeng, in his extraordinary census of Toba *marga*,⁵ was the only one to have followed a few Toba lineages, locating them in the Parlilitan region. He did not mention any mass defection. For him, the clans that had become Kalasan some four centuries ago were still Toba.

Then, in the second half of the twentieth century, ethnologists (too numerous to cite) focused instead on the Toba on the eastern bank of the lake, the region of Uluan—which abounds in magnificent villages with houses adorned with carvings (*uhir*) and decorations in slight relief, highlighted in black, white and red (*gorga*)—and on the Samosir Peninsula. Here and there they found enormous stone sarcophagi (*batu gaja*). The remarkable film made in 1981 by Artur Simon⁶ (his book is also obligatory reading⁷), of a feast celebrating the transfer of the ancestral bones of a Toba *marga*

Fig. 9 Detail of the front of the magnificent sarcophagus of Ompu Raja Batuhoring Banjarnahor, in Parsingguran Pangambatan. Tradition has it that the man underneath the *singa* head is the deceased. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1986.

Fig. 10 Bone urn for the Banjarnahor *marga*. The statue on the lid depicts the deceased, Raja Tuan Gading, who wears on his upper arms the *gading* bracelets reserved for chieftains. The sculpture is not integral to the lid. Parsingguran Pangambatan. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1996.

Fig. 11 Horseman of Huta Pea Raja. Kalasan country. Notice the tongue curling out of the quadruped's wide open mouth: here we cannot be confused with the trunk of an elephant. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 1995.



Fig. 12 Map drawn by E. F. Karl Schiller reproduced in Warneck 1912.

on the western bank of the eponymous lake, showed that the ancient traditions were not forgotten, that the *adat* was still observed. That was sufficient reason for the ethnologists to restrict themselves to these rich regions and to gather all sorts of information, to be examined with caution, from the elderly members.

Being a historian and not an ethnologist, since 1974 I have undertaken a photographic inventory of the traditional Toba houses and of the Toba or Pakpak stone monuments. That was the subject of a first book.⁸ I then came to take an interest in the vast region between Lake Toba and the Indian Ocean (called Upper Barus and Lower Barus), which, it seemed to me, had been neglected by researchers. In 2000, after some fifteen visits, a health problem prevented me from continuing south to the Silindung Valley. I stopped returning regularly to Indonesia. Fortunately, I had meticulously explored the coastal region between Sibolga and Barus, depicted as being uninhabited on most of the recent maps in ethnographic works, and which is actually occupied by several Toba villages, rather poor today (fig. 15) but rich in stone monuments (figs 13–14).

In 1999 I published part of my discoveries,⁹ made both along the shore and in the hinterland of Barus. The remaining task was to devote a book to the Kalasan alone, a few of whose funerary statues I had reproduced. As it happens, this book has come into being in large part thanks to the work done by my Toba collaborator Anthony Pardede, who belongs to a famous *marga* in Balige. The two of us met in 1978, during my third trip to Sumatra. Anthony, self-taught, was excited by that search



Fig. 13 Sarcophagus, dating back five generations, of Ompu Rasuhul Sihaloho, carved by the *datu panggana* Ompu Tinggir Sihaloho. The head of the man (the deceased raja) toward the back of the lid is detachable. Huta Langat, northern Samosir. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1996.



Fig. 14 The author lifting the head at the back end of the sarcophagus. The hole located just below was designed to hold a finger and a small amount of viscera from a sacrificed child. When all these substances had decomposed, the head was put in place, the neck resting on the bottom of its housing. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Jana Ansermet, 1996.



Fig. 15 Village of Huta Napitupulu, on the shore of the Indian Ocean. Toba Batak. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.

for funerary stone monuments (sarcophagi, urns), for the great "horsemen" (*marhoda gaja*) or the portraits of "royal" wives. In my absence, he visited regions missing on the available maps and formed friendships with old people born in the early part of the twentieth century and who had seen Indonesia become independent. He noted down words of those whose relatives practised the traditional religion, *ugamo perbegu*.

Anthony made the acquaintance of many village chieftains, such as Raja Pane Sitorus, who became my friend and who had a good knowledge of the *ugamo perbegu*. He gave me a great deal of information between 1978 and

his death in 1987; in 1978, at my request, he allowed himself to be filmed by Télévision Suisse Romande.¹⁰

This book ought to whet the curiosity of those who like "to learn to know the Other". In the first place, it tells of an unknown people, the Kalasan, with a well-defined identity, occupying a region to which, according to the genealogist Hoetagaloeng, young Toba had immigrated to found new Toba lineages.¹¹



Fig. 16 Statue (*mejan*) representing the ancestor of the current raja of the village of Huta Napitupulu, Raja Sutan Mangan Hutagalung. It is unfinished. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.

Notes

1. Based on recent statistics, there are 2 million Toba, 1.2 million Pakpak and 600,000 Karo.
2. The Kalasan (with the exception of the Marbung-
Sehun) form a subgroup of the Pakpak, who, like the other Pakpak subgroups, have not been studied. But apparently, only the Simsims (immediate neighbours of the Kalasan) have the distinction of having created carved stone monuments representing an important figure (a village chieftain or magician) astride a mount with the body of a buffalo and a strange head. Of the two, only the Kalasan once constituted several Toba lineage groups for which the original clans are known, gathered on a small plain surrounding the large village of Parlilitan, and only they decided en masse to become a Pakpak subgroup, in conformance with the Indian guru's teachings, which they, like the Simsims, followed.
3. Estimate based on the number of generations between my informants and the founder.
4. Some thirty skulls have been counted in a single sarcophagus on Samosir Island.
5. Hoetagaloeng 1926.
6. *Toba-Batak (Indonesia, North Sumatra) – Feast of a Secondary Burial 'Ulaon panongkokhon saring-saring'*, produced as part of the Encyclopaedia

Cinematographica, directed by Artur Simon, 1981.

7. Simon 1982.
8. Barbier-Mueller 1983.
9. Barbier-Mueller 1998, pp. 79–155.
10. The result was a fifty-minute film produced by Bernard Mermod that has been shown several times in Switzerland.
11. In the end, these lineages decided to form not a Toba subgroup but a Pakpak subgroup. I do not believe that this unusual situation has been pointed out before.

Information Note

The Republic of Indonesia is divided into provinces (*provinsi*), each with a governor residing in its capital (for North Sumatra, or Sumatera Utara, the capital is Medan). The *provinsi* are divided into *kabupaten*, regencies, and *kota*, cities large enough to have their own administration. Sometimes a city is also the seat for the residence of the *bupati*, who is in charge of the *kabupaten*. The city is headed by a mayor, or *walikota*. Finally, the *kabupaten* are subdivided into districts, *kecamatan* (pronounced "ketjamatan"), overseen by a *camat* (pronounced "tjamat"). Note that the island of Nias as a whole is a *kabupaten* belonging to the province of North Sumatra.

View of Lake Toba from Samosir Island. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Chapter I History and geography of Batak country



HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF BATAK COUNTRY

The Prehistory of North Sumatra

About seventy-five thousand years ago, in the province of North Sumatra, the volcano at the site of what is now Lake Toba (fig. 17) erupted. It is believed that the eruption lasted for two weeks. It was the strongest ever known to humankind, which at the time was represented by several branches of hominids. There was *Homo neanderthalensis* and our ancestor, *Homo sapiens sapiens*,¹ who left Africa a little bit more than hundred thousand years ago and came

to be called "Cro-Magnon Man" once he had arrived in Europe via the Near East, forty or fifty thousand years ago.

There is nothing to indicate that Batak country was populated at the time of the tremendous eruption. The configuration of the lake was modified by a later eruption, which occurred about thirty-five thousand years ago (fig. 18). Rising up from the depths of the waters was the peninsula of Samosir, outside the giant caldera formed at the time of the first explosion. It was also at that time that the cliff linking Porsea to Parapat emerged. Modern man was already present in the Far East, but we do not know if he had settled in Toba territory. Is that ignorance the result of an absence of archaeological excavations of the area, none of which has been undertaken to this day?

Fig. 17 From Huta Buntu Raja, view of the headland of Siregar, directly ahead, and of Samosir, on the left. On the right, the initial portion of the bay of Bâlige heading towards Porsea can be discerned. As for the cove at the photographer's feet, it shelters no village. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1980.



After the last ice age ten thousand years ago, between 8000 and 3000 BC, the ocean level rose and created many of the islands of Southeast Asia. On the shore of Sumatra in the Strait of Malacca, not far from Batak territory, large mounds of shells accumulated, the remains of the shellfish consumed by the peoples living there, probably "Australians" (formerly called "Australoids"). That period is known as the Hoabinhian,² named after an archaeological site in North Vietnam.

In those heaps of shells of considerable depth, lithic tools typical of the Hoabinhian Period were discovered, none of which has ever been found on the mountainous plateau forming Batak territory. We will come back to that later.

The lake, a hundred kilometres long with a maximum breadth of 30 kilometres, is dotted with a few islets: The only inhabited one is Sibandang in the Gulf of Muara, in the southern part of the lake. I mentioned "Australians". Peter Bellwood tells us that a skull found in Liujiang, in the Guangxi Province of China, is described as "Mongoloid with some Australo-Melanesian features".³

And it is precisely from southern China that the Mongoloids, without any Australo-Melanesian characteristic and speaking Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) languages, immigrated to Taiwan in the fifth or fourth millennium BC. There they remained for about a thousand years, before setting off on the greatest migratory movement ever seen on the planet.

Fig. 18 This shot from the southern hills shows the aridity of the slopes of the enormous crater containing the dark waters of Lake Toba. At that altitude, 980 m, the temperature is pleasant, despite the proximity of the equator. On the other side, the Samosir Peninsula. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.



The study of the proto-Austronesian language (in Taiwan)⁴ provides us with a view of an economy in which the people raised pigs, owned dogs, and grew rice, millet and yams.

By about 2000 BC, Austronesians were settled in the Philippines and had probably reached Borneo, Sulawesi and the Moluccas. They had added to their diet chicken, coconuts, taro, bananas and sago. They chewed areca nuts wrapped in betel leaves. Above all, they had added sails to their boats. This was still the Neolithic Age, so that the tools were made of stone, bone or sharp shells. On the Southeast Asian continent, no Bronze Age preceded the Iron Age. Metallurgy appeared at the end of the first half of the first millennium BC, except in North Vietnam, where bronze casting (undoubtedly learned from the Chinese) appeared in the second half of the second millennium BC. In about the fifth century, also in North Vietnam, there arose a civilization that would have a major influence on Island Southeast Asia. It has been given the name of the site in Dong Son, near Hanoi, where the first

bronze axes, situlae, drums and other typically Dong Son objects were discovered.⁵

Belonging to the Dong Son civilization were the famous Heger type I drums, several exemplars of which were found in Indonesia, some exported from Southeast Asia (fig. 19), others coming from moulds produced *in situ* with new symbolic decorative motifs and cast by skilful local bronze workers.

Found in the south central part of Sumatra, on the Pasemah Plateau, was a large rock that had been carved in high relief in such a way as to represent a man sitting astride an elephant and bearing a Heger type I drum on his back (fig. 20).

Not far from there, the statue of a human figure was found, wearing a headdress or helmet with a visor in back and riding a buffalo. In an earlier publication, I linked that rider to two representations of Batak "horsemen". The first of these represents an ancestor of the small Sinamo Toba *marga*, which settled in Pakpak Simsim territory, in Kuta Santar, near Salak. The second representation is taken from the work of Gerard Tichelman and Petrus Voorhoeve,⁶ and the monument is that of a chief of the Simalungun Batak (Eastern Batak). The Toba "horseman" seems to be riding a buffalo; the Simalungun chief is mounted on an elephant. Each of them has the same visor at the back of the helmet (or headdress) as the "Pasemah Man", as well as his general attitude.



Fig. 19 Bronze Heger type I drum. The sides are decorated with "barks of dead souls", actually warriors. Found in central Java. Early Christian era. Diam. of drum: 150 cm (the largest known). Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

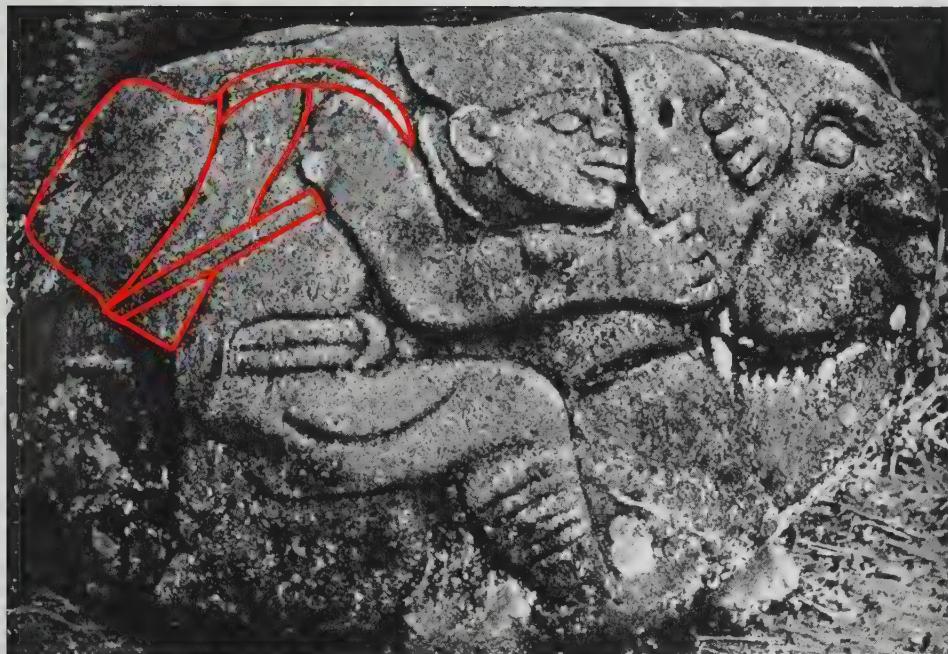


Fig. 20 Rock carved in high relief. The figure, wearing a helmet of sorts that protects the back of his neck, is riding an elephant without trunk, recognizable by its large ear. The man wears a Dong Son drum slung across his shoulder, highlighted in this illustration. From Edwin Meyer Loeb and Robert Heine-Geldern 1935.

The figure bearing the drum, and the large Pasemah buffalo rider have been dated to the early first millennium AD.

Were there people at that time over almost the whole island with the same traditions and the same magico-religious practices? Did those of the north (the Batak) remain fiercely attached to these traditions, even as the inhabitants of the Pasemah Plateau and of the centre of the island abandoned them, first for Hindu-Buddhism and then for Islam? Bellwood's conclusion that the stone monuments of Nias or Batak territory have no "archaeologically documented" antecedents⁷ must be kept in mind here; archaeological excavations might tell us whether the area around Lake Toba already accommodated the

ancestors of the Batak fifteen hundred or two thousand years ago, and whether the stone "horsemen" of the Toba and the Pakpak (which are never more than three or four hundred years old) had predecessors.

Let us leave that question aside. The exploration of a people's past advances slowly throughout the world, and more particularly in Island Southeast Asia. That is only one hypothesis among a hundred others. In our ignorance about the exact date of arrival of the Austronesians in Sumatra, and in the absence of any research conducted scientifically on the soil of Batak country, allow me to place three images side by side. It is up to the archaeologists to one day tell us whether the resemblance among these images is fortuitous.

The establishment of the Batak in Sumatra

No one is able to say when the Batak came to occupy the highlands of North Sumatra province.

During my travels in Batak country, nearly everywhere I went, and with great persistence, I showed the villagers two small axes, one carved from flint, the other in polished stone, purchased at the Jalan Surabaya flea market in Jakarta. None of my interlocutors told me that they had ever happened upon such stone tools or that they had even seen any. The owners of antique and second-hand shops in the small city of Parapat (already a tourist spot during the Dutch era) were unanimous in declaring that they had never seen such axe stone blades in Batak country. It does seem that when the Batak arrived in the highlands they occupy, they were already in possession of the various techniques of metallurgy. They cast ritual or ornamental objects in bronze and forged iron weapons and tools. No doubt they arrived in the area around Lake Toba after other waves of migrants reached Java, for example.

It is indisputable, based on the ethnic typology of the Batak that they intermarried with an "Australian" population encountered during their migration, or living in north Sumatra. Two photographs suffice to demonstrate this. In addition to the prominent bulge of the forehead and the strong jaw, the Batak generally have rather brown skin (figs 21–22) compared to Indonesians from Java and Bali. I do not think (and I would be happy if future archaeologists were to prove me wrong) that "Australians" occupied the area around Lake Toba. The

Australians had tools and weapons of carved stone, and it seems to me that people would have come upon them, as they do everywhere that the furrows of ploughmen bring them into the world. Sold in native markets as talismans, they are often called "thunderstones".

The most complete genealogies I have collected among the Toba indicate that twenty-five to thirty generations (*sundut*) separate my informants from the mythic ancestor Si Raja Batak. If a generation is thirty years, that places the supernatural arrival of Si Raja Batak nine hundred years ago. A bit on the short side ...

It is an established fact that genealogies are "purified". When a clan that is becoming powerful happens to be the descendant of the last son of a raja, of a young man without importance, whereas the second or third son of the same raja has left the reputation of a man of war or a skilful magician, the genealogy is modified, and the clan henceforth declares it is descended from that brilliant son, not from the youngest. That well-known phenomenon sometimes assumes a more complex form.⁸

Furthermore, it may be noted that the founders of the first clans (*marga*) descending from the sons of Si Raja Batak had several sons, each of whom, it is said, immediately founded a new *marga* in his turn. That is altogether contrary to a continuous tradition of the Toba Batak, from whom the Kalasan are descended, which dictates that a lineage separates from its *marga* only after some fifteen generations (there is no rule: one lineage is known for having separated from its *marga* after eight generations). At that time, the founder of the lineage appears in a dream to

one of his most illustrious descendants, a *raja* ("king" or village chieftain) or *datu* (magician), announcing that his soul has raised itself in the hierarchy of the Hereafter to the third-highest rank of *sombaon* (*somba* means "to revere"). The ancestor indicates the place where his bones are to be transferred (usually a mountain), and a great feast (*santi rea*) is held, which all his descendants attend. On that occasion, the lineage descending from the ancestor declares that it is separating itself from its *marga* to become a new, independent *marga*, and it adopts the name of the celebrated ancestor. Its members will now be allowed to take wives from within their former *marga* without committing incest: exogamy is respected.

If, every time we see a clan founder immediately succeed another in the genealogies, we add about fifteen generations, we will likely arrive at the first centuries AD, not even counting the ancestors who were forgotten, either unintentionally or intentionally, because they had behaved in a shameful manner.

It is still a reach to conclude that one out of two generations might be missing and that the Batak have been in North Sumatra for almost two thousand years. That, however, would be the ideal time for the arrival of a people possessing the technologies of iron metallurgy and copper alloy casting.

Fig. 22 Toba Batak woman. The square shape of her face, the accentuated horizontal bulge along the forehead, and the square chin clearly show that her ancestors intermarried with the Australians, who occupied all of Indonesia and the Philippines before the Austronesians' arrival. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Fig. 21 A young Balinese girl, whose features can be categorized as typical of Southern Mongoloids. All rights reserved.



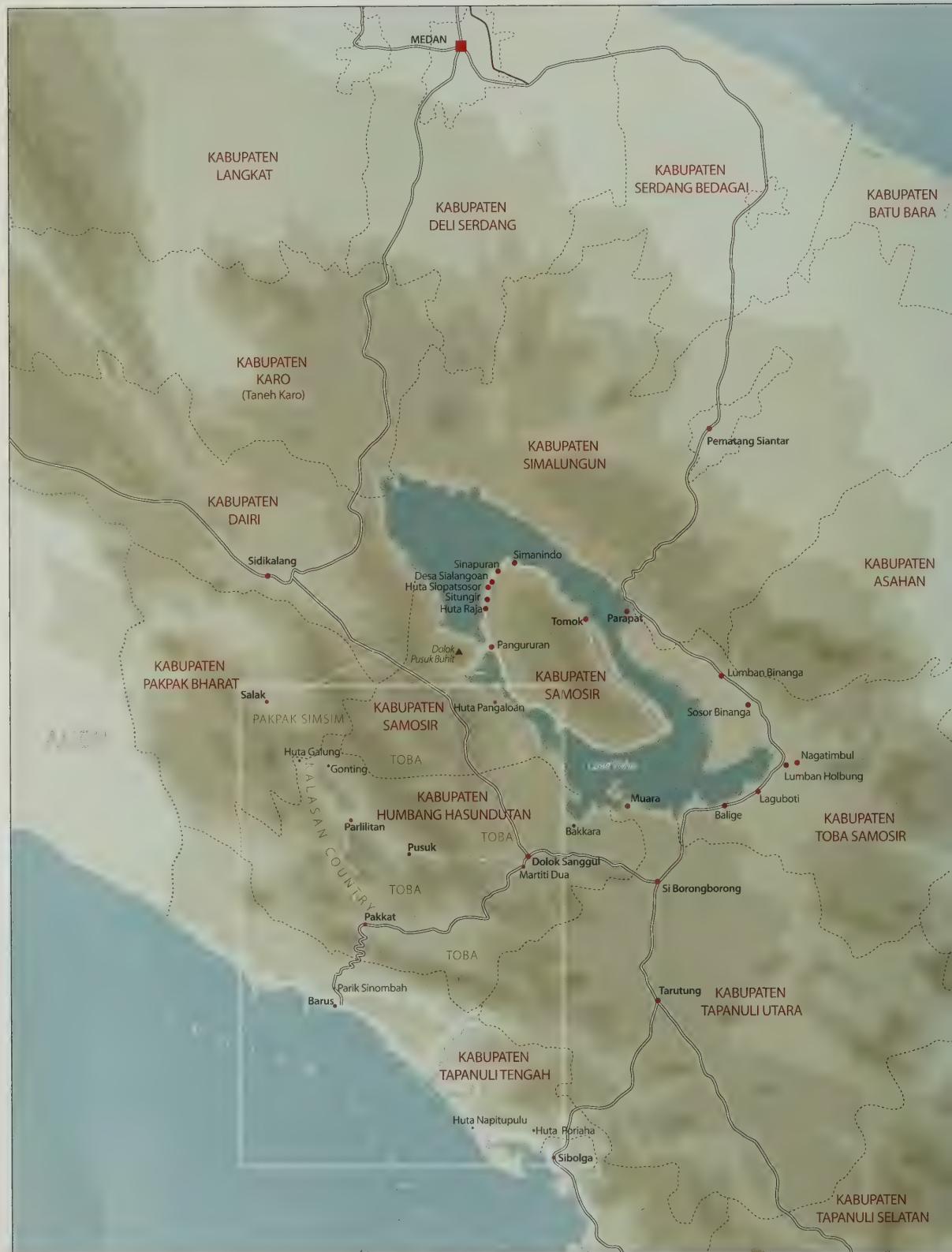






Fig. 23 Female statue with "twins" in Pematang Siantar, wrongly considered a *pangulubalang*. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1980.

Geography and description of Toba country

Located on the sixth largest island on the planet, the province known as North Sumatra (Sumatera Utara) is bordered on the north by that of Aceh (pronounced "Atjeh"), which was frequently in the news during the tsunami of 26 December 2004. Aceh has been a Muslim sultanate since the fifteenth century and had contacts with the Karo Batak.

The capital of the province (*provinsi*) of North Sumatra is Medan, a city of more than two million residents, most of them Malay, located near the Strait of Malacca (see map, p. 36). Fortunately for the traveller, Polonia International Airport lies at some distance from that smoggy city, on the road leading to the interior of the island. Once you arrive, you may proceed directly to Parapat, which everyone takes for the Toba "capital", situated in the regency (*kabupaten*) of Simalungun. About four hours by car, Pematang Siantar, the seat of the regency administration, is an obligatory stop, allowing you to discover a small museum set up before 1940 with the cooperation of Dr Petrus Voorhoeve. Outdoors it displays a few interesting sculptures, accompanied by utterly false information. A female effigy with two children in her arms (fig. 23), for example, is designated as a *pangulubalang* (an offensive magic statue that brings evil down on enemies and also protects the village), something that scandalized Dr Voorhoeve. In reality, the statue represents the wife of a Simalungun *tuan* (village chief).⁹ That says a great deal about the information available today. There is also a small, rudimentary sculpture representing a man (the missing head was restored in 1993).



Fig. 24 Rudimentary sculpture, whose missing head was restored in 1993. It depicts a man astride an unidentifiable animal, which is termed a *gajah* (elephant). Pematang Siantar Museum. abm—archives barbier-mueller.

Photo by the author, 1996.

riding on the back of an unidentifiable animal (fig. 24) designated as a *gajah* (elephant).

A low chain of mountains remains to be crossed, and there, in a bight of the lake, is the township of Parapat, a former health resort for colonial officials afflicted with malaria, who came there to take a mountain cure: it lies at an altitude of slightly more than 900 metres. During the daytime, a moderate wind maintains the temperature between 23 and 28 degrees Celsius, depending on the season, with cooler nights. In the distance, everywhere, stand mountain peaks, including a few volcanoes, some extinct, others active (Sinabung, for example, erupted again in August 2010; it and its neighbour, Si Bayak, are both in Karo country).

As soon as you leave Parapat via the Uluan Plain south-west of the lake, you enter the *kabupaten* (regency) of Toba Samosir (the *bupati*,¹⁰ or head of the regency, resides in Balige).¹¹ That regency extends a considerable distance to the south and coils around the southern shore of the lake, eventually making way for the regency of Humbang Hasundutan, which also has a strip on the lakeshore, but not as long as the one in the aforesaid *kabupaten*. The head of the *kabupaten* has his office in Dolok Sanggul, at the centre of one of its ten *kecamatan* (districts). Its neighbours are the regency of Pakpak Bharat to the north-west (its *bupati* is in Salak), Samosir to the north-east (*bupati* in Pangururan), and Tapanuli Tengah to the west and south-west (*bupati* in Sibolga) (see map, p. 37).

Among the ten *kecamatan* (pronounced “ketjamatan”) of Humbang Hasundutan is Parlilitan, or roughly, Kalasan country, which lies completely within the regency. The *camat* (pronounced “tjamat”, district chief), of course, resides in Parlilitan itself. There are no statistics indicating the number of Pakpak Kalasan. I estimate that population at some five to six thousand individuals (I took a census of thirty-four villages, overlooking five or six, and I think that each village contained between a hundred and two hundred residents).

Since Batak country is close to the Equator, it is tempting to think (and it has often been written) that it was once entirely covered with thick forest, ravaged first to create farmlands, and then to satisfy the needs of the publishers of Western or Japanese newspapers. That is not altogether accurate. The mountain slopes plunging into the lake and the steep valleys

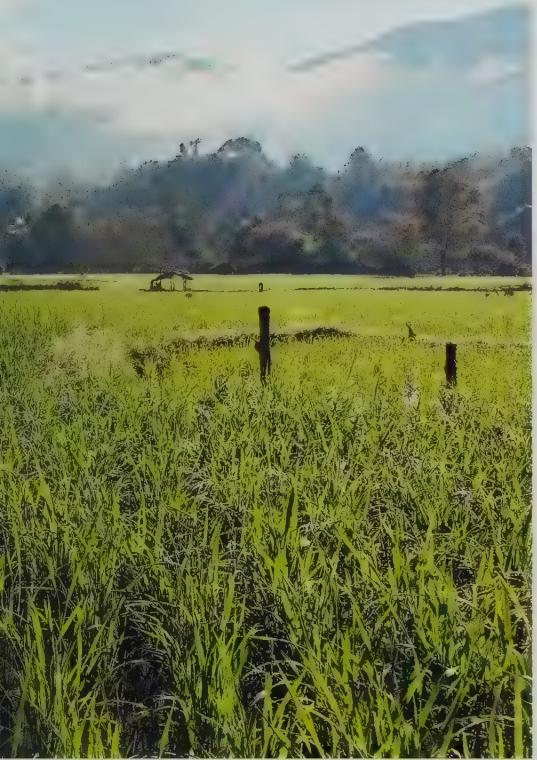


Fig. 25 Rice fields in Kalasan country. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

are covered almost everywhere with scant undergrowth and a little grass, nourished by the rains that soak the land almost constantly. It pours during the rainy season (from May to September and from November to February, approximately), and there are frequent brief showers during the two “dry seasons” (approximately March–April and September–October).

The shots of the sloping banks of Lake Toba reproduced here show clearly that they were

never covered with trees that would have been uprooted for cultivation (figs 17–18). They are valleys that were destroyed to cultivate various plants, especially rice. There are more paddy fields than slash-and-burn rice agriculture. By contrast, it is clear that many territories were and sometimes still are covered with thick primal forests (figs 26, 27, 30). Pakpak country is an example, as illustrated by the photographs that Wilhelm Volz took in the early twentieth century (fig. 28). Another photo by the same author shows us hills in Karo country



resembling the denuded shores of Lake Toba (fig. 29).

The regency of Humbang Hasundutan, to which the district of Parlilitan belongs, has magnificent forests (fig. 30), especially in the district of Sijama Polang, where benzoin resin is harvested. But the plain of the Kalasan was certainly a victim of deforestation at an early date.

Fig. 27 Bridge crossing to Sibokare by the "secondary road" on the way to Parlilitan. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Fig. 26 The "road" from Parlilitan to Pakkat, southern Kalasan country, bordered by primal equatorial forest. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



For reasons of logic, I have taken the liberty of extending somewhat the borders of the Upper Barus and Lower Barus (when compared to the port famous since antiquity, which primarily exported benzoin resin). The Upper Barus is the home of the Kalasan, then of the Toba, north to south and west to east. The Lower Barus includes the mountainous region near the Indian Ocean and the entire shoreline. Its inhabitants are mainly Toba, with sometimes a Pakpak Simsim family looking for a better region to settle.

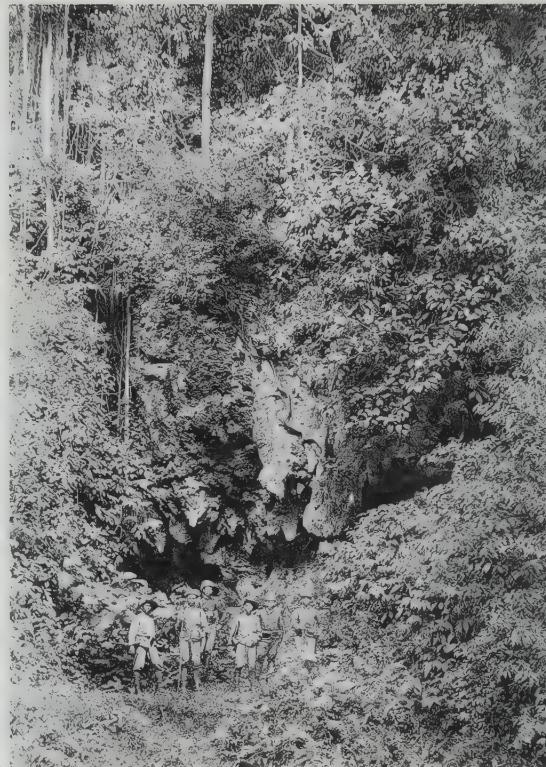


Fig. 28 Primal equatorial forest in Pakpak country. From Volz 1909.

Fig. 29 Mountainous region naturally devoid of trees, like the shores of Lake Toba. Pakpak country. From Volz 1909.



Notes

1. The first appearance of our ancestor in East Africa, and the pathways he took to populate Asia and Europe, are the object of continual reassessment. His appearance is now situated at an earlier date, about 120,000 years ago.
2. Bellwood 1997, p. 170: "Hoabinhian sites sensu stricto do not occur in the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago outside north-eastern Sumatra."
3. Ibid. p. 83. I am beholden to Bellwood for much of the substance of this chapter and do not cite him every time I adopt one of his conclusions.
4. Ibid. p. 241.
5. Resolutely diffusionist authors such as Robert von Heine-Geldern published photographs of Toba Batak motifs, comparing them to very similar motifs typical of the Dong Son, such as the "inverted double spirals". Since the Dong Son civilization reached Java and the Lesser Sunda Islands, that hypothesis is not at all unlikely. But it lies outside the scope of this book.
6. Tichelman and Voorhoeve 1938, fig. 54.
7. Bellwood 1997, p. 287.
8. Vergouwen 1964, p. 42.
9. See Tichelman and Voorhoeve 1938.
10. The *bupati* are in some sense prefects. They are Batak, so that they can understand the populace they administer, but are also required to be Muslims, and they display an exemplary fidelity to the federal government in Jakarta, who intensely fear nationalist tendencies (those of Aceh or those that have often arisen in the Moluccas, instigated by the Christians). Federating six thousand islands is no easy task!
11. The name of that regency is incomprehensible. It does not include any parcel of the territory of Samosir Island. There is another *kabupaten*, named precisely "Samosir", whose *bupati* resides in Pangururan; it covers the entire island, plus a good portion of the western shore of the lake, bordered to the south by the *kabupaten* of Humbang Hasundutan and to the north by the Pakpak Bharat (West Pakpak) *kabupaten*, populated for the most part by Pakpak Simsims, with its *bupati* residing in Salak.

Fig. 30 Primal equatorial forest. Kalasan country, between Parlilitan and Pusuk. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



The author in front of the ancestral home (*jabu porsantian*) of Ama Jamulatua (Tahi Situmorang), eighth-generation direct descendant of Purbatua. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Jana Ansermet, September 1980.



Chapter II The Batak groups and their territories



THE BATAK GROUPS AND THEIR TERRITORIES

The six groups claiming to belong to the Batak people (*bangso batak*) are, from north to south (see map, p. 36): the Karo, the Pakpak, the Toba, the Simalungun, the Angkola, and the Mandailing.

The first group, which gave its name to Karo country (Taneh Karo), has five main *m'rga*, or *mërga* (*m'rga si lima*), and eighty sub-*m'rga*. The Karo have eleven independent territories called *urung*, headed by a raja, known as a *sibayak*, and twelve smaller "states" (also independent), each with a *pengulu* at its head. The *sibayak* were officially vassals of the sultan of Aceh, who offered them a precious dagger when they were enthroned. In actuality, the distance between Karo country and Aceh territory, and the absence of any representative of the sultan among the *sibayak*, rendered that suzerainty wholly theoretical.

Fig. 31 Two types of roofs, Karo houses. Village of Lingga. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.



Unlike the situation in the Toba *marga*, these *m'rga* are not tied to an "original" territory bearing their name. You find a mix of the eighty sub-*m'rga* that provide their patronymic to the men in all the *urung*, from B'rastagi to Kutabuluh, even though there are significant cultural differences between the Eastern and Western Karo. Karo houses are scattered around unfortified villages, not placed in rows like those of the Batak. The Eastern Karo houses, assuming several forms (fig. 31), stand next to rice granaries and funerary huts for the bones of ancestors (*gériten*) (fig. 32). Western Karo houses are different, and will be the subject of a book to be published in 2012. The Pakpak comprise five subgroups, or more accurately, regions (*lima suak*) that have not been seriously studied (it would be too late now for such a research). From north to south, these are Boan, Pegagan, Kepas, Simsim, and Kalasan. All the Pakpak except the Kalasan live in the two *kabupaten* of Pakpak Bharat and Dairi, the latter being adjacent to the

Fig. 32 *Gériten*, ossuary for the skull and long bones of an ancestor. Lingga. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.





Fig. 33 Kuta Raja, Pakpak Kepas village. From Volz 1909.

Western Karo. North of Dairi, in the vicinity of Kutabuluh and along the border between Pakpak and Karo countries, extending almost to Lau¹ P'rimbon (a village, which in 1995–96 had the only traditional house of the Western Karo still intact), there are only Karo villages. In Kutabuluh itself, it was remarkable to note in 1998 that the owners of shops of all kinds were Toba who had settled there recently, one or two generations ago at most.

It is Volz once again who provides us with a view of an unfortified village of the Kepas: the curb roof on the houses displays an obvious kinship with the architecture of the Karo (fig. 33). I do not think there are still any such traditional houses in Dairi, but I did not carry out any research outside the places I wanted to visit. The Toba are the most populous group (probably close to 1.5 million individuals) and the most expansionist, since from their mythic

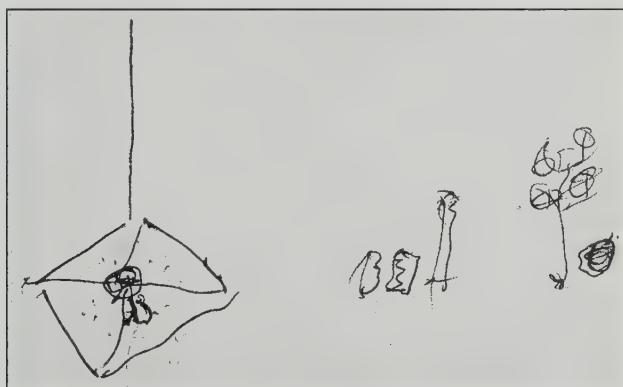


Fig. 34 Sketch by Guru Ferdinand Halasan Silalahi representing what the ancestral home (*jabu porsantian*) of every Toba lineage is supposed to have: at left, the suspended altar, or *ragaraga* (with, attached in the centre, the receptacle for magic products, or *guriguri*); centre, the two stone *pangulubalang* and the magic wand, *tunggal panaluan*; and at right, the sacred tree, or *harihra* and spring, *homban*.



Fig. 35 Guru Ferdinand Halasan Silalahi, displaying two stone *pangulubalang* in Tomok. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, March 1980.

place of origin, Samosir Island, they established themselves in all the *kabupaten* neighbouring the lake to which they had given their name, then as far south as Angkola, and to the east in Simalungun, Asahan, Deli Serdang, and of course Medan. There are also many Toba in Java, where they often form an intellectual elite, producing generals, professors, ambassadors and ministers, at least among those who have embraced the Muslim religion. In about 1920, 80 per cent of the Toba were Christians and the rest animists.

They claim to be the "original people", divine in nature, descendants of Si Raja Batak, a claim accepted by the members of *marga* (regardless of the group) founded by Toba ancestors but



Fig. 36 The "sacred ancestral house" (*jabu porsantian*) of the Purbatua lineage of the Situmorang *marga* in Parmonangan. Photo Petrus Voorhoeve, before 1939.

rejected by the Pakpak (with the exception of the Kalasan),² the Karo, and the Simalungun of non-Toba origin.

Each *marga* stems originally from a village enclosed within a defensive talus of thorny bamboo (*bulu suga*), or from a small territory from which the "mother village" of the lineage (*saompu*) expanded, having become a *marga*. That original site holds, or held, the *jabu porsantian* (ancestral home) of the *marga*, where the suspended altar (*ragaraga*) and a pair of statuettes of unnamed ancestors, called *debata idup* (the sculptures represent "ancestry" in general, not two identified figures), were to be found. According to Guru Ferdinand Halasan Silalahi (fig. 35),³



Fig. 37 The ancestral home of the Purbatua lineage of the Situmorang in Parmonangan, after its reconstruction in about 1940. The *singa* on each side of the façade have disappeared, but a section of the carvings was reused above the entrance. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, September 1980.

that sacred place ought ideally to have been guarded by two *pangulubalang* (defensive and aggressive fetishes) and a *tunggal panaluan* (the largest of the two magicians' wands), and to have been located near a spring (fig. 34).⁴ Usually, the village and the *jabu porsantian* have vanished. The house of the Purbatua lineage of the Situmorang *marga* (fig. 36), for example, reconstructed with the old carvings and with new parts after a cyclone in about 1940 (fig. 37), was again blown down by the wind shortly after 1980. This time the carvings (pp. 44–45) were sold and the boards of the house burned, replaced by what the Toba call a *lobu*, the place where an ancient village used to be, recognizable by its talus-wall (*parik*) eaten away by time.

Toba houses are all lined up on one side of the rectangle formed by the *parik*; opposite them are the *sopo*, consisting of rice granaries in the upper story and meeting places or dormitories for young single men in the intermediate story, which has no side walls. Almost all of these have now been turned into residential houses and equipped with walls to protect them from the wind. You enter a *sopo* by an external ladder, a house by an invisible staircase placed under it, leading to a trap door of sorts.

The Simalungun (Timur Batak; *timur* means "east" in Malay, and is translated into Toba as *purba*) are often presented as being adjacent to the Toba. Yet their western fringe is bordered by Lake Toba, they are separated by the Uluan Plain by a mountain barrier, and the Toba with whom they are familiar are primarily those who live in Asahan, which the excellent botanist and linguist Harley Harris Bartlett explored in the first quarter of the twentieth century. There were four Simalungun kingdoms, for which the

sovereigns (*raja na opat* or *berempat*) designated the local leaders (*tuan*).

These kingdoms were Raya (Purba), Pane, Siantar and Tanah Jawa. In the excessively renovated "palace" of the old raja of Raya (Purba), which has been turned into a "museum", there is a plaque bearing the engraved names of the successive sovereigns, of which I took a photo (fig. 38). The last sovereign was hacked to pieces by his people because he was too loyal to the Dutch colonial authority. Let me note in passing that that vast traditional dwelling, whose architecture is reminiscent of Karo houses, contains the last *ragaraga* (suspended altar for offerings), square in form and true to the tradition, in all of Batak country (fig. 39).

The Simalungun have four main *marga*, corresponding to the four kingdoms. Many immigrants from every region live among them. However, it is unusual for them to gather as a community. One of these *marga* was founded by a Toba and another (it is said) by a Pakpak. Simalungun, by the way, is the neighbour of another large *kabupaten*, Asahan, populated almost entirely by Toba, except the coastal portion.⁵

As for the last two groups, the Angkola, south of the Toba, and the Mandailing, even today they continue to observe the *adat*, or customary law (especially patrilineal descent and exogamy), though the Mandailing at least converted to Islam two centuries ago. I shall not consider them here. Susan Rodgers is the only Batakologist who has spent more than a year "in the rough" among the Angkola, almost all of whom are of distant Toba origin. In my view, she alone would be truly qualified to speak of the Toba as well. In 1999, at the request of



Fig. 38 Plaque engraved with the names of the successive sovereigns (raja) of the Raya (Purba) kingdoms of the Simalungun. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.

the Barbier-Mueller Museum, she carried out a mission among them, in the region of Dolok Sanggul-Parlilitan to be precise, but she did not write anything, believing her knowledge insufficient, baffled as she was by the difference in customs from those observed in Angkola, even though the language spoken in Angkola (which she had mastered perfectly) is almost identical to Toba. A modest attitude, remarkable in every respect ...

Notes

1. *Lau* in Karo and *lae* in Pakpak are synonyms for the Toba *aek*, meaning "spring", "brook" or "stream". *Bulu*, or *buluh*, means "bamboo" in all the Batak languages. The village, *kota* or *kuta* in Karo, is called *kuta* among the Pakpak and *huta* in Toba.
2. I have only passed rapidly through the region of the Pakpak Simsim and the Pegagan on a few occasions. There are undeniably Simsim *marga* (such as the B'rutu) whose founder was Toba. Do his descendants trace



Fig. 39 Suspended altar (*ragaraga*) in the "royal house" of Raya (Purba) in Simalungun. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.

their genealogy back to Si Raja Batak? I do not know. It takes courage to immerse oneself in the life of a village for six months or a year, as Singarimbun did among the Western Karo, and as Susan Rodgers did in Angkola, and one needs to speak the language perfectly to be able to untangle what appear to be contradictory threads and which are often only multiple aspects of a myth, a custom, or a genealogy, as the individuals questioned remember it. Just when you are about to give up, a few pieces of the puzzle may fall into place.

3. Interviews of March 1980.

4. Personal communication of Guru Ferdinand Halasan Silalahi in 1978. I suspect that his account is based in large part on information from the *parmali* living near his small house in Tomok. In fact, the part that Philip O. Lumban Tobing had him play in a fake ceremony, which consisted of a "magic wand planted in a rice basket" (his assistants dispersed after the photo, Silalahi told me), piqued his curiosity about the religion into which he had been born (he was baptized a Christian as a young man). Since his sole source of information was the *malim* community, which he visited very often, he had reconstructed for himself a "pidari world" that must have been rife with distortions. Hence my reservations regarding his drawing and description of the *jabu* *porsantian*.
5. I did not have the opportunity to visit Asahan.

Façade of a Toba house in Lumban Binanga. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Chapter III The mythology of the Toba



THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE TOBA

The Kalasan, the main subject of this book, are all of Toba origin. They confirm that the Indian sage Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan persuaded them to burn the bones of their dead and that he changed nothing about their religious beliefs. We must deduce there that they continued to practice the *ugamo perbegu* of the Toba and to observe the rules of the *adat* of their Toba ancestors, while at the same time, oddly enough, attaching themselves politically to the Pakpak group, because their Pakpak Simsim neighbours had also resolved to observe the bone cremation rite recommended by the Indian guru. We do not know anything about the ancient religion of the Simsim. The discovery of the existence of the veneration of Naga Padoha, god of the Underworld, among the Western Karo,¹ who live in permanent contact with the North and Central Pakpak, makes the following supposition by no means unreasonable: all the groups forming the *bangso batak* (Batak people) could have possessed a mythology and a cosmogony rather similar to those of the most powerful and undoubtedly oldest group, namely, the Toba. An Upper World, a Middle World entrusted to the care of humankind (*manisia*), and an Underworld: that schema is also found among a great number of peoples of western Indonesia, from Nias to Borneo.

Starting from that hypothesis, if we wish to describe the ancient Kalasan, we must describe the ancient Toba, about whom we have a large number of available sources, which are often in disagreement. That, however, does not call into question the myth of the three worlds. Even

today, we know of no book of magic written by a Pakpak magician and possess no information about their socioreligious organization. Only a few photographs and drawings tell us that they protected themselves from evil spirits in the same manner as the Toba (fig. 40).

Counted among the important sources are reports by the missionaries of the Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft, whose archives I examined in Barmen, near Wuppertal. The bulletins containing these nineteenth-century reports make for captivating reading. Works by certain missionaries, such as Johannes Gustav Warneck (a fundamental book),² by mission doctors such as Johannes Winkler,³ and by Vergouwen,⁴ a lawyer in charge of averting conflicts between Dutch law and the *adat*, are the best-known sources. Older authors, from Burton and Ward⁵ to C. B. H. von Rosenberg⁶ and Joachim von Brenner (fig. 41),⁷ having visited the region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, left behind travel narratives that need to be consulted,⁸ but only to compare their illustrations with more recent photos.⁹ Not all the travellers were curiosity seekers in pursuit of exoticism: here and there, it is possible to glean a piece of information that fits perfectly, like a puzzle piece, from amidst other, apparently disconnected information.

Waldemar Stöhr undertook a careful examination of all the creation myths collected in Batak country (especially among the Toba) since the nineteenth century. The result was a book of exemplary honesty, published in Germany in 1965.¹⁰

The summary that follows is partly beholden to many sources found in Stöhr's book, which I do not cite, with additions primarily from Warneck and Vergouwen and from



Fig. 40 Row of wood fetishes (*pagan*) protecting a Pakpak Kepas village from evil spirits. Drawing by Volz 1909.

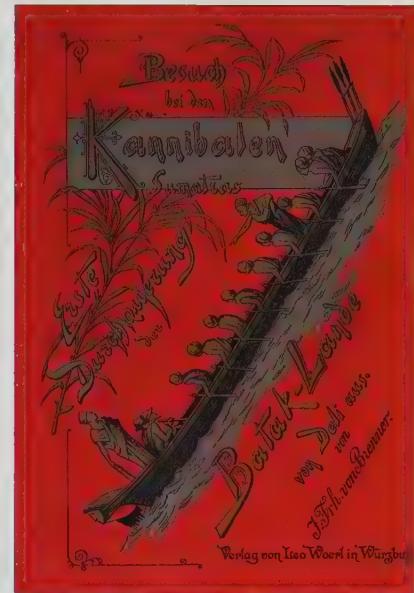


Fig. 41 Cover page of Baron von Brenner's travel narrative, 1894. The war boats (*solu*) disappeared in about 1920. abm—archives barbier-mueller.

my interviews with elderly Toba (primarily between 1974 and 1980), whose statements I have treated with a great deal of caution, since these are people who were brutally cut off from their roots. It also seemed essential to me to add the version found in the religion current among the *parmali*, created at the instigation of Si Singamangaraja XII, who died in 1907. According to Professor Ibrahim Gultom,¹¹ the principles of *malim* belief were set forth during Si Singamangaraja's own lifetime.

There are several versions of the Toba creation myth, with major contradictions existing among them.¹² Further complicating matters is the misrepresentation by Philip O. L. Tobing, presented in his doctoral thesis of 1956.¹³ Wishing to astonish his research director and to earn his admiration, he concocted things at whim, but was foolish enough to publish photos of a ceremony depicting a *datu* (himself in disguise!) and his assistants (fig. 42). The event, he said, took place in a "remote village". He could

not foresee that, in 1980, a researcher (myself) would run into one of his assistants, age seventy-eight, in Tomok and would become friends with him (fig. 35).¹⁴ The name of that kindly assistant encountered by chance was Ferdinand Halasan Silalahi, though Tobing bestows the given name "Pordinan" on him, no doubt to sound "more pagan". Silalahi told me in minute detail how a band of young Toba, all Christians and with only a vague notion of the ancient animist *ugamo perbegu* (they had converted to Christianity early on), found themselves dressed in costumes provided by Tobing, who was inspired to stage and photograph a "ritual" from a well-known old photograph showing a *datu* planting a magic wand in a rice basket. Nothing more happened after the shots, which were intended to convince Tobing's thesis director that his student had discovered the survival of that "animist" ritual, still in force in a "remote village".¹⁵ In 1965 the sham had not yet been discovered. Stöhr, however, already adopted a critical tone, noting the "offhand" way that Tobing had cast aside

certain rules of religious ethnology. But Stöhr was unable to disregard Tobing's new theories completely, given that they were so similar to those of the great Hans Schärer on the Ngaju Dayak of South Kalimantan. That worried Stöhr somewhat but also fascinated him. Above all, he was unable to conceive of the fact that an ethnologist, the student of the famous professor J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong, had not "observed" such an important ceremony in a "remote village" but had organized it himself, and that the spectacle was only the staging of an old, well-known photograph devoid of commentary! When I informed him of this and showed him proof of my conversations with the "guru" Silalahi, he told me he was deeply distressed about that dishonesty, since the author's thesis went in the direction of the Leiden School's theories and might continue to be cited by people who had not read my book. Alas, he was

right. Tobing's book appears in the most recent bibliographies alongside my own *Tobaland*, in which it is exposed.

I therefore chose to follow Stöhr's cautious compilation in setting out in simplified form the mythology of the Toba, and especially the creation myth, which "every tribe recounts in its own way", as a rather annoyed Warneck writes.¹⁶ I completed it with the help of the myths preserved by the *parmali* (there is a blank space in the literature available to us, between the twins born to the goddess who created the earth and the mythic ancestor, Si Raja Batak, a void I hope to have filled accurately, by cross-checking my sources). We shall later see that the Toba creation myth has an enormous value: it is the key that allows us to decipher the complex ornamentation of the houses, as well as the magico-religious sculptures held in museums. That decipherment is made possible by the god



Fig. 42 Philip O. L. Tobing (two red crosses) disguised as a *datu*, staging a "ceremony" in about 1950, assisted by the young Ferdinand Halasan Silalahi (one red cross), who was a baptized Christian and knew nothing about the old religion, *ugamo perbegu*. The location was Parapat, where a few traditional houses still remained, though they were demolished shortly thereafter. From Philip O. L. Tobing 1956.

of the Underworld, Naga Padoha, represented as a polymorphous but always identifiable monster, the *singa*, to which I shall later return.

The supreme god and the deities of the Upper World

The Toba believe (or I should say, believed) in the existence of three worlds: the Upper World (*Banua Ginjang*), the Middle World (*Banua Tonga*), and the Lower World or Underworld (*Banua Toru*). The word *debara*, borrowed from Sanskrit, can designate a god or all the gods. Mula Jadi—a name that, according to Warneck, means the “origin of becoming”—is called “Great” (*na Bolon*). He has always existed, as has the monstrous deity of the Underworld, Raja or Naga Padoha. They were present before the existence of the Middle World, which Mula Jadi helped his granddaughter Sideak Parujar create.

There does not seem to be any variant of the myth that would make Mula Jadi the creator of the cosmos, the universe. He is responsible only for the creation of the Middle World, *Banua Tonga*. He resides in the last of the seven levels of the Upper World, along with his bird assistants, two crows.¹⁷ Mula Jadi has three sons¹⁸: Batara Guru, Soripada and Mangalabulan,¹⁹ who live in the second level of the Upper World. They emerged from three eggs big as cooking pots, laid by a hen that was by no means giant, whose image appears in many painted decorations on the sides of traditional houses (fig. 43). Some versions of the myth make that bird the wife of Mula Jadi.

From his seventh level, the creator god sent three women to his sons. Here the myths diverge: sometimes these are three eggs, laid by a different hen,²⁰ from which three young ladies emerge.



Fig. 43 The cosmic tree (*harihara*), small supernatural figures with round faces and a single eye, with (at right) the hen (?) that laid the eggs from which the three sons of Mula Jadi na Bolon emerged. The sons may be represented at left, aboard a bark. Painted decoration on a Toba house in Uluan. abm—archives barbier mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.

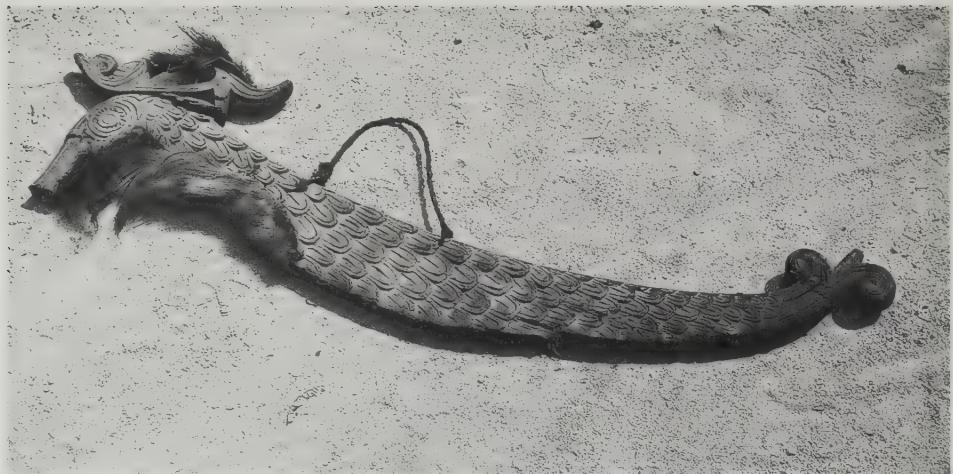


Fig. 44 Portable effigy of boru Saniang Naga, demigod living in Lake Toba. This is a wood "charm" that once protected fishermen from drowning. Samosir. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.

Warneck also mentions various versions of the myth that we shall disregard.

Mula Jadi transferred to his three sons the "governance of the world", writes Stöhr.²¹ That author believes that Mula Jadi is not a *deus otiosus* in the strict sense, because he gives Sideak Parujar the means to create the Middle World. But after that final manifestation of a rather restricted activity, he retreats to his seventh level and attracts little further attention.

Batara Guru occupies a dominant position. He lives in Banjar Dolok (that is, "Mountain City") and plays the role of judge, seeing that order and the *adat* are respected. He has a son, Sori Mahummat, and a daughter, Sideak Parujar, who is called upon to play a key role in the creation of the Middle World.²² He will later have two more daughters: Siboru Sunde and Siboru Margiring Omas.

Soripada (called Debata Sori in the *malim* religion) is a cantankerous deity who must be appeased through sacrifice and prayer. He resides in Banjar Tongatonga (that is, "Middle City") and has a son named Tuan Sorimangaraja. According to Warneck,²³ that son has a daughter, boru Saniang Naga (fig. 44),

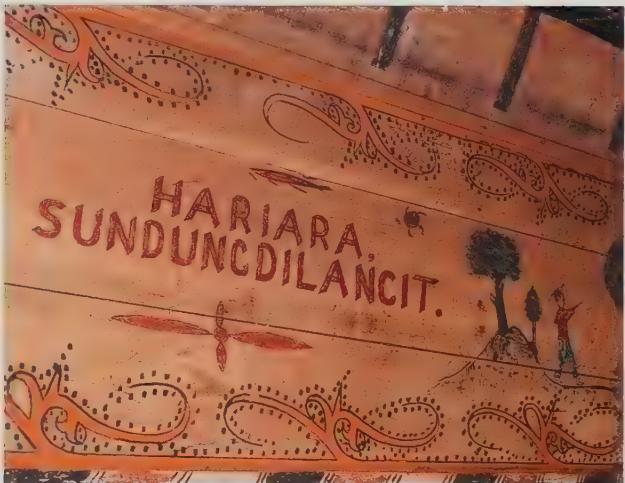
a female deity with the aspect of a serpent, a version that was adopted by the *malim* religion. For many fishermen of Samosir, boru Saniang Naga is merely one of the numerous "nature spirits". Warneck makes Tuan Sorimangaraja the brother, not the nephew, of Batara Guru. I believe, based on various written and oral sources, that he is mistaken. The "scaled serpent" (fig. 44) is an old charm used to protect fishermen from the misdeeds of boru Saniang Naga: so I was told in the Toba village of Dolok Martaban (Situmorang *marga*) where this carving was lying on the ground, abandoned, two children playing with it as a toy. A man showed me the cross around his own neck and said: "Now we no longer need any charms!"²⁴ Since I made it a rule not to collect anything from a village, I took a photo of the object and departed.

Finally, Mangalabulan (called Debata Bala Bulan by the *induk punguan*, or high priest, of the *parmalmil*), residing in Banjar Torun (that is, "Lower City"), is vain, vicious and prone to do harm to men. His son, deformed, is named Tuan Dipatpat Tinggi or Tuan Ruma uhir Tuan Ruma gorga; his daughter, Si boru Surantibonang. In addition to the creator god and his sons (who constitute a trinity), there is

Fig. 45 Recent inscriptions on the side of a renovated Toba house, showing the persistence of the belief in the cosmic tree. Lumban Tabu. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.

a fifth god: Debata Asiasi, who has the ability to settle disputes arising between Mula Jadi's three sons. Like Mula Jadi and Naga Padoha, he too seems to have always existed. In certain myths, he is (wrongly?) identified with Mula Jadi. Burton and Ward returned from their expedition in the Silindung Valley with the impression that the supreme god of the Toba was Debata Asiasi: "The Bataks believe in the existence of one Supreme Being, the Creator of the World, whom they name DEBATA HASI ASI."²⁵ As for Warneck, he writes that Debata Asiasi lives in an unpleasant place, a squalid shack, and that he is not the object of much veneration.²⁶

In a recent email exchange, I asked Professor Ibrahim Gultom, who holds a chair at the University of Medan and is the author of an important book on the *malim* religion. He believes that Debata Asiasi, the ancient god of the *sipelebegu* (the followers of the old Toba religion), was not known to the *parmaliim*, who had "integrated [him] into the trinity formed by the three sons of Mula Jadi".²⁷ Nevertheless, back in 1980 I recorded a prayer being recited by a woman who professed the *malim* religion, in the village of Lumban Si Jabat (Samosir Island, eastern shore), where he was invoked second, after Mula Jadi. Could some *parmaliim* have "rehabilitated" him? What deviations exist among them? What memories of the *ugamo perbegu* persist in particular families?²⁸ Only an academic specializing in religious ethnology, a gifted specialist who knows the Toba language perfectly, could find, behind the fanciful additions and borrowings from other religions, some of the roots of the ancient *ugamo perbegu*—purified, transformed by the *parmaliim*, but not equally in every region perhaps?



The cosmic tree (*harihara*)

Before speaking of the Lower World or Underworld, I shall now turn to the creation by Mula Jadi of a heavenly or cosmic tree called *harihara sundung di langit*,²⁹ that is, according to Stöhr, the "Banyan tree that bends toward the sky" (fig. 45), which the Toba of today have not forgotten. I photographed its name on a freshly repainted house. To the right of that inscription are drawings of two small shrubs, far removed from the beautiful trees decorating traditional houses: their asperities and hooks, and the decoration that surrounds them, aptly demonstrate that the foliated friezes running along the sides and the façade of the house are all allusions to the cosmic tree (figs 46–47). The supreme god planted it in Angkola Jula, that is, in the southern part of Batak country. That tree is also found in the mythology of the Niassians, close (though insular) neighbours to the Toba. In the different versions of the myth that Stöhr consulted, the *harihara* does not sink its roots into the Underworld, unlike the Niessian myth and that of the Ngaju Dayak of Kalimantan, that are the subject of remarkable and voluminous publications by the Basel missionary Schärer, which inspired the fraud Tobing to a great extent. That was all it took for Tobing to make



Fig. 46 Another painting on one of the lateral plank walls of a Toba house in Uluan, representing the cosmic tree, with birds and a horseman. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.



Fig. 47 Fairly recent naive painting on the side of a Toba house, representing an asymmetrical cosmic tree. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.

the cosmic tree the connection between the three worlds, the Under, the Middle, and the Upper, which Voorhoeve deemed impossible in advance, reporting a myth that claimed that the descendants of the three gods, the sons of Mula Jadi, had severed the tree's roots.³⁰

The destruction of these roots, resulting from an aggressive act from the Upper World, comes after the creation of the cosmos. One thing is clear, however: originally the cosmos contained two deities, Mula Jadi in the Upper World and Naga Padoha in the Underworld. It is very likely that in early times, these two worlds were connected by an *axis mundi*, the tree of life or cosmic tree. It seems to me that, for once, Tobing was right. The treetop penetrates into the kingdom of Mula Jadi na Bolon, and it is not surprising to find, among the old paintings that adorn traditional houses, the tree with figures of tiny nature spirits, and on the right, perhaps the representation of the hen that gave birth to the three gods, sons of Mula Jadi (figs 46–47). In fact, when we examine carefully the various representations of the *singa* monster in Toba architecture, and in its art in general, we shall see that this is not simply the figuration of Naga Padoha. The face of the *singa*, when represented alone—flat or in slight relief—in the middle of the façade of a traditional house, often bears horns ending in foliated whorls, which it is impossible not to see as the foliage of the tree. It is obvious: it struck several specialists on the Toba (fig. 48).

Fig. 48 Rectangular panel separating two boards with lively scenes on the façade of a Toba house. The foliated horns of the *singa* evoke the cosmic tree. abm—archives barbier-mueller.
Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

The fundamental antagonism between the Upper and Under Worlds, specific to western Indonesia (in opposition to the hierogamy observed in eastern Indonesia, from the Sunda Islands as far as Leti and the South Moluccas), makes inevitable the existence of a conflict between the horned serpent Naga Padoha (the Buffalo-Dragon), lord of the Underworld, and the three sons of Mula Jadi, and especially with his granddaughter. She transfixes Naga Padoha with her sword, while leaving him with the ability to convey souls to their resting place.

The creation of the Middle World by Sideak Parujar

Sideak, or Sideang Parujar (she is venerated by the *parmalim*, who, however, do not attribute to her all the acts recorded in the ancient myths) is most often presented as the daughter of Batara Guru, which has today been confirmed by the *induk punguan Raja Marnangkok Naipospos*, high priest of the *malim* religion (*ugamo malim*) (fig. 49).³¹ In his doctoral thesis of 1927, Voorhoeve reported a version of the myth that makes her the daughter of the mysterious Debata Asiasi.³² According to other versions of the creation myth, she was sired by her uncle Mangalabulan, or even by her grandfather Mula Jadi na Bolon. Voorhoeve has provided a summary of these variations. Toba country is vast, and the mythical accounts are not written down, though a few fragments of them can be found in the *pustaha*, which are usually and primarily books of magic recipes. Rather, they are transmitted orally, like all mythic epics among the peoples of Africa and Oceania. "Slippages" can therefore occur. The exact identity of Sideak Parujar's father does not affect her mission,



however. She is supposed to be married off to Tuan Dipatpat Tinggi, son of Mangalabulan, but he has the skin of a chameleon and looks like a big lizard. In short, he is deformed. The goddess asks to postpone the union until she has finished spinning a complete ball of cotton. But like an Asian Penelope, she never finishes. After seven years and seven months, her ball is still the size of an areca nut. Seeing that no further delay will be allowed, she asks Mula Jadi to open a door in the celestial vault for her, and she throws her distaff through that aperture. On the pretext of wanting to retrieve it, she slides down along the

yarn.³³ She finds herself in the Middle World, which is covered with water. There she sheds abundant tears, as the waves toss her about. A swallow shuttles between the goddess and her grandfather, attempting to find a solution and to reconcile their respective desires. Finally, Mula Jadi gives in and sends a large handful of earth to his granddaughter. She spreads it out, this way and that, and presses it smooth. Having completed her handiwork, she possesses a place to live in the Middle World (*Banua Tonga*). Unfortunately, the earth has been spread out over the back of Naga³⁴ (or Raja) Padoha, lord of the Underworld. He splashes about, and Sideak Parujar again finds herself in the water, in great distress. The faithful swallow speedily returns to Mula Jadi. "So!" he says, "wasn't the earth I sent you any good?" Informed of the situation, the supreme god, angered, sends a sword to his granddaughter. Then he creates eight suns, which dry up the sea, leaving Naga Padoha stranded and in a state of exhaustion. "Are you the one who did that?" he asks Sideak Parujar. "Of course," she

replies, "because you scattered my earth." And she drives the sword into the dragon's body to the hilt, fixing him to the ground. Then she encloses him inside in an iron block. Some say that only his tail stuck out, which allows him to cause earthquakes. The dragon himself, according to Warneck, advised Sideak Parujar that, should his tail move involuntarily and cause the earth to shake, she should shout "*suhul*"³⁵ to remind him of the sword transfixing him. The *parmali*m have forgotten most of that brutal creation of the Middle World.

Once Naga Padoha is neutralized, Mula Jadi sends Sideak Parujar seventeen handfuls of earth to rebuild what the dragon has destroyed.

Sideak Parujar's marriage and her descendant Si Raja Batak

Sideak, or Sideang Parujar, once well established in Sumatra, is not long in finding Mangalabulan's son, who has also come there from the Upper World. His appearance has changed and he bears a new name, Si Raja Uhun Manisia ("administrator of the Law of Humanity"),³⁶ or Raja Odap Odap,³⁷ according to the *induk punguan* of the *parmali*m, and also according to Hoetagaloeng, or so Stöhr reports.³⁸ When Si Raja Uhun (I shall arbitrarily adopt that name) appears outside Sideak Parujar's house, he fires a dart from his blowpipe at a dove, which dies at the goddess's feet. Coolly, the newcomer asks to have the bird roasted for him, since he is hungry. Sideak Parujar complies with that wish, opens the bird's belly, and discovers in it all sorts of tree and cucurbitaceae seeds, rice grains, and other comestible plants (in his summary, Stöhr elides that important passage from Warneck,³⁹ which

Fig. 49 Raja Marnangkok Naipospes (at left), supreme chieftain of the *ugamo* *parmali*m (*malim* religion), in front of his residence in Medan, in the company of Anthony Pardede, the author's collaborator since 1978. Anthony was born a Christian but is now a Muslim, having married a Minangkabau. 2011. abm—archives barbier-mueller.



makes Raja Uhun Manisia the “cultural hero” present in all the myths of Island Southeast Asia).

The two gods, alone on earth, get married, an incestuous union if ever there was one, since Sideak Parujar is the daughter of her husband’s paternal uncle. The *induk punguan* of the *parmalmim* (fig. 49) remarked that since there are no humans on earth at the time it cannot be a transgression. The husband then appeals to his grandfather Mula Jadi, noting that night reigns over their dwelling place. Nothing can grow. Then Mula Jadi creates the sun, further evidence of not insignificant activity by the supreme god. It might be expected that the union of Raja Uhun and Sideak Parujar would produce the ancestor of the Batak. Warneck says nothing about it, passing in review half a dozen variants of the creation myth without ever raising the question of the divine couple’s children. This, Stöhr finds deeply regrettable.⁴⁰

In 1926, the Toba genealogist Hoetagaloeng (his name is still written in the Dutch manner, even though the name of his clan is now spelled “Hutagalung”) published a succinct history of the Toba people. Sideak Parujar and her husband supposedly have twins: a boy, Raja Ihatmanisia, and a girl, boru Ittamanisia⁴¹ (the *parmalmim* now call them “Raja Ihat Manisia” and “boru Ihat Manisia”). In the 1970s and 1980s, I often received confirmation of these two names, in the forms just mentioned, as the ones borne by the forebears of the most remote ancestor of the Batak people, Si Raja Batak. They are not truly considered to belong to humankind (*manisia*) but are also not divine (*debata*). Mula Jadi comes down to earth to explain to them how to make sacrifices to the gods, then

ascends to heaven again, taking with him Sideak Parujar and Si Raja Uhun Manisia. The link is definitively severed between the Upper World and the Middle World, where, however, two deities still dwell: boru Saniang Naga, living in Lake Toba, and Boraspati ni Tano, god of fertility (*tano* means “earth”). Both the *induk punguan* of the *parmalmim*, Raja Marnangkok Naipospos, and Professor Gultom in his book on the *ugamo malim* (fig. 87), make boru Saniang Naga the sister of Sideak Parujar and the “mistress of all the waters” on earth. So as not to offend her, the *parmalmim* cannot even shower naked but must be covered with a veil! Boraspati ni Tano may have been a god, though it is more likely that she is to be ranked among the “nature spirits”. The *malim* religion does not include her among the deities.

Raja Ihat Manisia⁴² fathers three sons: Raja Miokmiok,⁴³ Patundal⁴⁴ Begu and Si aji Lapaslapas.⁴⁵ Raja Miokmiok has one son, Eng Banua,⁴⁶ whom Warneck designates as the true ancestor of the “Batak people”,⁴⁷ who came from Malaysia.⁴⁸ He is the father of Eng Domia⁴⁹ (or Raja Bonang Bonang), who also has three sons: Guru Tantan Debata, Si Raja Aceh and Si Jau.⁵⁰ I do not know the name of the wife of Guru Tantan Debata, the “magician sent by heaven” (*tantan* means something like “suspended from what is high”, or literally, “hung low”), father of Si Raja Batak.

Si Raja Batak marries Si boru baso Manggiring and they have two children: Guru Tateabulan, the husband of Si boru baso Burning, and Raja Isumbaon, husband of Si boru anding Malela.⁵¹ The Lontung moiety of the Toba descends from Guru Tateabulan, the Sumba⁵² moiety of the Toba from Raja Isumbaon.⁵³

The Middle World

The *Banua Tonga*, created by the gods of the Upper World on the back of the deity of the Underworld, will not hold our attention for long. Its inhabitants were given the task of lifting up prayers to the Buffalo-Serpent-Dragon, immobilized but still capable of performing certain functions. He receives the souls of the ancestors, semi-deified in some cases, and when the fancy takes him to stir, people have to remind him that he has been pinned to the bottom of the ocean, by shouting *suhul*, a word designating the handle of a sabre.

The table opposite provides the names and ages of the Toba I questioned, asking them whether they knew a way to make an earthquake stop. It is clear that, no doubt because of the high frequency of seismic events in North Sumatra, everyone remembers the "magic word", which I find to be one of the most astonishing things I observed among the very pragmatic Toba. For if you ask them why they shout it and what the noun *suhul* means, they rarely make the connection to the word signifying "handle of a knife, of a dagger", though they know it perfectly well. They think it is a "sacred word" given by the gods. As for those who do know that *suhul* is the handle of a dagger, they are far from recalling the treatment inflicted on Naga Padoha. The Toba language is so full of words with a double meaning, religious and everyday, that they are attuned only to those dealing exclusively with magic. As a matter of fact, it was only in the Upper Barus that I found people who remember that Naga Padoha bears the Middle World on his back; they were also able to say that the monster *singa* is the representation of Naga Padoha, which amazed me. In the "native country", the Toba

have been Christianized for a hundred years or more, or they are *parmalim*, acquainted with different myths. As indicated in the table, I also asked the informants other questions regarding facts mentioned elsewhere in the book. The reader will make of them what he will. Note that, though some informants could not answer other questions, they all knew how to stop an earthquake.

In addition to that role as agitator, Naga Padoha is, quite logically, a god of fertility (that cult is strong among the *parmalim*). Given that he lives underground, who else would have the power to push up the shoots of plants sown in furrows? I do not think that the *parmalim* invented their prayers; rather, they preserved that legacy from the old *ugamo perbegu*, while forgetting the properties of the evil dragon, master of the Underworld, Naga Padoha.

Mula Jadi received his share of prayers, so that there would be no risk of his being displeased. Nothing was expected of him, however. Who other than the souls of the ancestors, therefore, lodged in the Upper World or having contact with it, were better placed to plead the cause of human beings, their own descendants, to obtain good harvests for them, victory in war, safety during epidemics, and so on? That accounts for the worship of these ancestors and for the offerings made to them. Offerings are rarely made anymore to the gods, who cut off all contact with men, as the myth clearly says. That also accounts for the extreme importance of funeral rites, for the enormous expenditures made during the second and final interment of the bones of the deceased Toba, to which all and sundry in the related clans are invited.

On earth, human beings are responsible for averting catastrophes and for watching over their livestock, the wild animals they hunt, and the plants they cultivate. To that end, they exert enormous efforts. Placed between an Underworld and an Upper World at war with each other, they have the task of maintaining balance in that conflict. They are the arbiters of

divine war. Their role is so important that they are sometimes called *debata ni tonga*, "gods of the Middle". Of course, they would not exist without Mula Jadi and Sideak Parujar, but, having been abandoned by their creators, they use their ingenuity to allow the Middle World to endure and to prosper.

Survey of the Toba Batak

Conducted by the author in March and September 1980 in villages in Samosir and Uluan and south of Lake Toba⁵⁴. For images of the buffalo with scales, see fig. 51 and the whole wand in fig. 100.

Informant's name	Place of birth	Age in 1980	What does the buffalo with scales represent?	Is there a way to stop an earthquake?
Binjar Panjaitan	Lumban Sosor	52	Buffalo of Donda Aji Hatahutan.	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Lupas Sidabutar	Tomok	56	Dragon who can stop an earthquake.	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Raja Mual Sinaga	Suarsamon	59	Does not know.	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Immanuel Manurung	Huta Bagasan Jangga	69	It's a dragon statue. ⁵⁵	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Predolin Manurung	Huta Sibunguon	62	Symbol of magic. ⁵⁶	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Elam Siagian	Silombun	67	Indicates magic.	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Kafé Sihaan	Huta Pantik Bosi	69	When they need water, it's the buffalo. When they need "spirit" (<i>begu</i>), it's the serpent.	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Buni Siagian	Silombun	54	Symbol of reincarnation.	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Punte Siregar	Untemungkur (nevara)	66	Does not know.	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Manahara Panjaitan	Huta Lumban Tala	72	The buffalo is to protect against an earthquake, the serpent to protect against black magic. ⁵⁷	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Darianus Hutagalung	Rente Mengkur	76	Does not know.	Shout <i>suhul</i>
J. Silaen	Huta Silaen	72	Serpent, cause of rain and illness.	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Jaudel Hutagalung	Huta Pantik Bosi	80	Does not know.	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Kaltin Silaen	Huta Silaen	62	Represents the <i>datu</i> for every kind of magic. Shout <i>suhul</i>	
Mengantor Hutagalung	Sutam Barat	65	Represents the rain and Naga Padoha. ⁵⁸	Shout <i>suhul</i>
Togar Silaen	Lumban Tambak	54	Symbol of magic.	Shout <i>suhul</i>



Fig. 50. Village of Huta Raja now a tourist attraction on Samosir Island. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Heider Da Silva, 2011.

For lack of space, I shall not speak of the traditional Toba house (fig. 50), a representation of the cosmos in miniature possessing an elevated story representing the "Middle World", where human beings live. Many passages in this book provide some idea of it. In any case, the Kalasan do not have houses with high roofs (an image of the Upper World), which exempts me from what would have been my obligation had I spoken only of the Toba. Remember that the Toba are discussed here at some length only because all the Kalasan clans are of Toba origin.

The Underworld (*Banua Toru*), realm of Naga (called Raja Padoha)

One of the first mentions of Naga Padoha comes from Burton and Ward, in the account of their expedition taking them from Sibolga, after they had crossed the double chain of mountains isolating that port from the interior, to the Silindung Valley, where they were able to admire rice fields stretching to the horizon, as well as large Toba villages. In the paragraph of their report devoted to religion, they write: "Besides these, they number amongst their deities the fabled serpent Naga Padoha, which they represent with horns like a cow supporting the world."⁵⁹ A cow supporting the world in Toba country and a buffalo in the mythology of the Minangkabau, the Toba's neighbours in central Sumatra, put us on the trail of the horned serpent (as Naga Padoha is described) and the buffalo covered with serpent's scales, which is common in Toba iconography.

Notes

1. See my forthcoming book *Le mythe de création oublié des Karo Batak occidentaux* that will be published in 2012.
2. Warneck 1909.
3. Winkler 1925.
4. Vergouwen 1964.
5. Burton and Ward 1827, pp. 485–513.
6. Rosenberg 1878.
7. Brenner 1894.
8. Von Brenner said that the bank came right up to Raja Tarhuak's boathouse in Lontung. But the water level has dropped considerably, and the boathouse is a long way from the shore. Voorhoeve solved that riddle for me. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Dutch set off dynamite at the mouth of the Asahan River, near Porsea. The level of the lake lowered immediately, but everywhere the vegetation took over the bare portion.
9. For example, von Brenner was held prisoner by the "pious" raja of Lontung, whose descendant William Situmorang I often visited in the 1970s and 1980s. His house contained a beautiful storage chest bed (*hombung*), adorned with *singa*. I often begged him never to agree to sell it, telling him that would bring him bad luck. I doubt he still owns it, given that his relatives sold the most beautiful carved stone column from Raja Tarhuak Situmorang's boathouse, right next to his house.
10. Translated into French as *Les religions d'Indonésie* (Paris: Payot, 1968). The book is divided into two parts: *Les religions archaïques d'Indonésie et des Philippines*, by Waldemar Stöhr; and *Les grandes religions d'Indonésie* by Piet Zoetmulder, (I shall not deal with the subject of the second part here). The title prompted me to name our 1981 exhibition *Art of the Archaic Indonesians*.
11. Communication of April 2011.
12. For example, it is alarming to see the disorder reigning in the report by the missionary W. Ködding 1885, pp. 402–9 and 475–80. The author is primarily concerned with demonstrating the influence of India over the Batak.
13. Tobing 1956.
14. I devoted a short chapter to that farce in *Tobaland* (1983) and printed the drawing made for me by Ferdinand Silalahi. That drawing also appeared in Tobing's thesis, completely redone by an artist and a long way from the original sketch by Ferdinand Silalahi, whom Tobing calls a "guru". The most amusing thing is that the good fellow developed an interest in the magical practices of the old-time Toba and regularly frequented a Toba family who had converted to the *ugamo pormalim* and who knew by heart all their prayers to the gods banished by the Dutch. All Silalahi's relatives and neighbours admired his knowledge, and his name was unfailingly preceded by the epithet "guru".

a tradition that was altogether unwarranted. Because of the extreme kindness of the man, I do not depart from that practice.

15. I confess I do not understand how he could have been foolish enough to disguise himself as the *datu*. Anyone who knew him and who saw the photo would have realized it was an imposture! It seems as if his thesis director, seeing his student dressed up as a magician in a photo serving as "proof", ought to have been on the alert. Perhaps the photo was added to the published book, after the typescript of the thesis was accepted. That is the most likely hypothesis.

16. Warneck 1909, p. 33.

17. No one has had enough imagination to see a resemblance to Odin there, even though the bird most present in the local legends and myths of Indonesia is the calao (rufous hornbill), not the crow, which is much rarer. Two species of crow exist in Sumatra, but I have never seen a single specimen.

18. They were adopted by the *malim* religion, with modified or entirely different names.

19. In this case, I believe, *manga* is related to *Mangaraja*, that is, *Maharaja* in Bahasa Indonesia, identical to the Indian title meaning "great king", in contrast to "raja" king. But since *bulan* means "moon" or "month" (in Toba and in Bahasa), I draw no conclusion.

20. The hen, stunned, cries out: "My head is the size of a spoon ... and my eggs are the size of jars. I'll never be able to hatch them!" Then Mula Jadi tells the hen to stop feeling sorry for herself and to sit quietly on her eggs. Three girls emerge from them, and Mula Jadi gives them to his sons as wives (Warneck 1909, p. 28).

21. Stöhr in *Les religions d'Indonésie* 1968, p. 63.

22. Stöhr names only Sideang (or Sideak) Parujar, and none of the other children of the three gods, Mula Jadi's sons. To find their names, I had to return to Warneck's original text (*Die Religion der Batak*, 1909), pp. 26ff.

23. Warneck 1977, p. 220.

24. That unintentional informant used the old word *pagar*, that is, "protective fetish", from the *ugamo perbegu*.

25. Burton and Ward 1827, p. 499.

26. Warneck 1909, p. 27.

27. Communication of 17 March 2011.

28. On the *malim* religion, see the glossary.

29. In his *Toba-Batak-Deutsches Wörterbuch* of 1906, revised by Winkler, Voorhoeve and Roolvink in 1977 (p. 108), Warneck indicates specifically: *harihara sundung di langit*, after the different expressions containing the word *harihara*, meaning "der Banianbaum", the sacred fig (*ficus religiosa*). Note that in India (and I can provide no explanation for this coincidence), the term *Harihara* designates the divine totality, that is, the fusion of the two deities Shiva and Vishnu. Is this another term borrowed from the Sanskrit

and given a different meaning? Probably. On the some two hundred Sanskrit words annexed by the Batak, see Harry Parkin, 1978, *Batak Fruit of Hindu Thought* (Madras: Christian Literature Society). Parkin's book is useful, but once he ventures beyond his own discipline, Sanskrit, he almost always follows Tobing in his speculations and inventions.

30. Petrus Voorhoeve 1927, p. 130. This thesis, dedicated to his parents, was published in Voorhoeve's native city.

31. Communication of 30 January 2011.

32. Voorhoeve 1927, p. 65. That would lend credence to Burton and Ward's version (see above). But we must always keep in mind Warneck's little saying: "To every region its own myth." I shall return to Debata Asiasi, since he seems to occupy an important place in the *malim* religion.

33. For the entire account, see Warneck 1909, p. 29 ff.

34. *Naga* is another word borrowed from India. Here, rather than "serpent", it is preferable to translate it as "dragon".

35. The handle of a sword or sabre.

36. The translation of the word *uhum* is always tricky. The easiest way to understand the exact meaning of the terms *uhum* and *adat* (which even the learned Voorhoeve himself confused on one occasion) is to refer to the Toba saying cited in Vergouwen 1964, p. 133: *Ditompa Debata jolma mangarajai uhum Ditompa Debata do uhum mangarajai adat*, that is, "The gods created man to oversee the administration of justice (*uhum*). The gods created the administration of justice to oversee customary law (*adat*)".

37. In Toba, the word *odap* designates a small drum hollow at both ends, which are covered with skin. May *odap odap* therefore mean "resembling a drum"?

38. Stöhr in *Les religions d'Indonésie* 1968, p. 68.

39. Warneck 1909, p. 31.

40. I consulted a few older works by missionaries active during the *pidari* era. None of them has a response to the questions Stöhr raised.

41. The word *manisia* means "humankind". Neither *ihat* nor *itam* has any meaning. I made a large number of inquiries, but in vain, often obtaining far-fetched responses. And Warneck, in his *Toba-Batak-Deutsches Wörterbuch* (revised by Winkler) does not mention either of the two words.

42. From this point on, the genealogy of Si Raja Batak was provided to me (thanks to the diligence of Anthony Pardede) by the *induk punguan* of the *malim* religion, Raja Marnangkok Naipospos, to whom I owe a large debt of gratitude (communication between late January and early February 2011). Certain collations were possible vis-à-vis Warneck's *Toba-Batak-Deutsches Wörterbuch*.

43. *Miok* means "to straighten up (again)".

44. *Patundang* means approximately "to turn one's back

on one another". Warneck gives a similar translation in his dictionary.

45. According to Warneck (*Toba-Batak-Deutsches Wörterbuch* 1977, p. 140), a *lapaslapas* is "ein ärmlicher, verkommener Mensch" (a poor man who has sunk low).

46. In his *Toba-Batak-Deutsches Wörterbuch* (1977, p. 81), Warneck mentions that Eng Banua came from the eastern shore (where, it is implied, he made land), and he alone ventured as far as Lake Toba, settling in the village of Si Anjur, founded, according to Vergouwen (who does not give his source) by Sideak Parujar (1964 p. 21): "Eng Banua, der Name des sagenhaften Stammvaters des Batakovolkes, der von der Ostküste her über Asahan einwanderte und sich in Siandjur, bzw. in der Landschaft Limborg niederliess."

47. Note the very early tendency of the German scholars (to whom we are enormously indebted) to speak of the Batak and not only of the Toba. And in fact, all the conversations I had in the 1970s and 1980s with elderly Karo or Pakpak produced vigorous denials: they were not descended from the Toba!

48. Warneck 1977, s.v. *Andjur* (p. 11): "Siandjur auf der Tobainsel ist nach einer Ueberlieferung die Wiege des Batakovolkes, das von Malakka ... nach Siandjur einwanderte" (According to tradition, Siandjur on Toba island is the cradle of the Batak people, who migrated from Malacca ... to Siandjur). The original village of the Toba, now called Sianjur Mulamula, is not "on the Toba island", as Warneck says, but on the slope of the sacred volcano Pusuk Buhit, on the opposite side from Lake Toba, into which lake the volcano plunges, across from the strip of land that makes Samosir "Island" a peninsula. The myth reported to Warnech is highly interesting, since it alludes to a migration of the Batak from the east, altogether consistent, therefore, with the great Austronesian migration.

49. *Domia* means "earth, world". "Eng" is simply the name of Eng Domia's father, a proper noun without any meaning.

50. *Halak jau* is used to designate an individual who does not belong to the Batak people. In his dictionary, Warneck is very clear: "Halak jau, ein Mensch nicht-batakscher Nationalität" (*Toba-Batak-Deutsches Wörterbuch* 1977, p. 65).

51. I was never able to find the ancestry of Si boru baso Manggiring, nor that of the wives of Guru Tateabulan and Raja Isumbaon.

52. See Vergouwen 1964, p. 6.

53. Ibid., p. 23 and note 58.

54. Of all these informants, only one (Elam Siagian) knew that *pupuk* is a magic potion made with a cadaver. By contrast, Elam Siagian was joined by Predolin Manurung, Kafé Sihaan, Darianus Hutagalung, J. Silaen, Kaltin Silaen and Mengantor Hutagalung in declaring

that *si biaksa* or *si biangsa* is the fat of a human being used to evil ends (Siagian) or the fat of a human being used to send mortar flying (Manurung). Sihaan and Darianus Hutagalung speak only of fat from a cadaver, but Kaltin Silaen and Mengantor Hutagalung mention the "fat of a child". The *datu*, by means of *si biangsa*, can make villages and mountains explode, say the latter two. This questionnaire contains a large number of questions and answers (many are unusable, given the state of our knowledge) and which, in any case, were beyond the scope of this book. It is a large scroll, photocopies of which I placed at the Quai Branly Museum in Paris and at the Volkenkunde Museum in Leiden.

55. He adds: "That represents water."

56. He adds: "It's the centre of the world on Raja Padoha's head."

57. The Batak readily speak of "white magic" and "black magic": I think they learned these expressions from us, just as almost all Africans have adopted the word *taboo*, which is of Polynesian origin.

58. That informant was *parmali* until his conversion to Catholicism in 1947, which may have influenced his responses. Note that all the others questioned were born *sipelebegu* (chosen for that reason, in fact), and all were converts to Christianity (the Catholics are in the minority), except Mengantor Hutagalung, who has been Muslim since the age of nine.

59. Burton and Ward 1827, p. 499.

Horseman of Huta Pea Raja: Kalasan country. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Chapter IV Naga Padoha the serpent, Naga Padoha the buffalo



NAGA PADOHA THE SERPENT, NAGA PADOHA THE BUFFALO

Reading this chapter, the reader shall refer to the aforesaid survey of the Toba Batak in which I asked my interlocutors the following question: "What do you know about this buffalo whose body is covered with scales?" showing them a photo of figs 51 and 100.

Recall as well Burton and Ward's words: "like a cow". Among the Minangkabau, an Islamized group neighbouring the Batak to the south, on the western shore of Sumatra, bits and pieces of the myth of origin survive. According to their myth, the Underworld is occupied not by a dragon-serpent but by a buffalo. As it happens, Naga Padoha, who has horns, sometimes takes on the aspect of a buffalo whose body is covered with a serpent's scales (figs 51–52). He assumes the form of strange quadrupeds and is recognizable only by one unvarying detail: an enormous tongue, undulating or coiled, almost always sticking out of his mouth (fig. 52).

Apart from references to his (unwilling) role as support of the Middle World, recalled in effigies taking the form of a serpent in Toba architecture, we know of few myths that allude to his important functions as "god of agriculture" and "god of the dead". It might be expected, of course, that an underground deity would be involved in both cases. But it is only indirectly, thanks to the *malim* religion—which perpetuates the cult of Mula Jadi na Bolon—that we can reply to the question already raised by Emilio Modigliani in about 1890: Why is the Toba



Fig. 51 Detail of a wooden magic wand (*tunggal panaluan*).
Bataks, Toba group. H. 189 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris.
abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.



Fig. 52 Detail of a magic wand (*tunggal panaluan*).
L. 189 cm. Bataks, Toba group. Staatliches Museum für
Völkerkunde, Munich.

world placed to such a great extent under the sign of that mythic animal known as *singa*, which is reproduced ad infinitum on houses and on the most insignificant magical objects, and which also serves as a mount for the stone “horsemen” of the Pakpak Simsim, the Kalasan, and the neighbouring Toba?

It is because the *singa* is an image, even an avatar, of Naga Padoha, god of harvests, the god who receives in his bosom (under the earth’s surface, in graves) the remains of the dead, a god who subsequently transports their souls to their final destination.

I am sure that, in carefully examining the magic wands and the lids of pots for magical potions from every museum possessing Batak carvings, we would find other scaly buffalo. “Horned serpents”, for their part, are abundant: on the wooden stoppers for buffalo horns (*naga morsarang*),¹ in which *datu* keep the less dangerous, less powerful preparations; and on the *singa ni ruma* adorning the façades of houses. For example, one photo of a *tunggal panaluan* belonging to the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Munich shows two horned *singa*, with four legs, and a long tail. Both have bodies covered with stylized scales (fig. 52).

These examples leave no doubt about the fungibility of the mythical dragon Naga Padoha and the buffalo-serpent. The stone mount for a high-ranking figure and the figure itself form a monument called *mejan* by the Simsim, the Kalasan, and all the Western Toba from the Upper Barus to Tapanuli Tengah, along the shore of the Indian Ocean. The Kalasan say that this name was bestowed by Guru Kalasan himself. According to them, it is unrelated to the same

name given to marionettes, those *mejan* or *bejan* of which Voorhoeve saw a demonstration in Lumban Pangaloan in 1939,² and which had the same function as the *sigale gale*, string-operated puppets that danced by night at the funerals of men who had died without children, to mourn them and to offer sacrifices to their souls. I do not believe these denials and persist in thinking that the Kalasan borrowed a word from their Toba neighbours referring to an anthropomorphic figure. In fact, the word *mejan* is unknown in India, even in the dialect of Tamil Nadu.

Let us now return to the best-known representation of the *singa*: the one decorating the façades of houses.

The *singa ni ruma*: Representations of Naga Padoha

Also called *gaja dompak*, these large heads, unrecognizable as any animal in creation, are placed on either side of Toba houses and rice granaries (*sopo*). On the houses, they have a large and tall central horn and two smaller, lateral horns, as well as an open maw with outlined “fish mouth” lips, a long thick tongue sticking out of it. These *singa* are considered female and are called *singa singa ulu lunjung* (*lunjung* means “recumbent”).

On each side of the façade of a *sopo* are male *singa*, their horns curving back over the nape of the neck. They are called *singa singa ulu gurdong* (*gurdong*, or better, *gurdung*, means “twisted, bent”). Note the open maw and the thick tongue (fig. 54).



Fig. 53 Singa on the façade of Darianus Sitorus's house in Lumban Tabu, the most beautiful house in the village. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1980.



Fig. 54 Detail of façade of a sopo of Lumban Tabu (Sitorus marga) in Uluau. Note the compact form of the singa, with horns curving backward. These are said to be male singa. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1980.

Some *singa ni rumah* have three horns, while others have only one broad horn (fig. 53), on which foliated motifs are incised—two modest lateral appendages reminiscent of shrivelled horns, ceding their place, perhaps, to a representation of the cosmic tree (fig. 54). There is no doubt in my mind that Naga Padoha, apart from his other functions and his representation as the *singa*, is closely related in one way or another to the cosmic tree, so strongly present on the paintings decorating the old Toba houses. How could the cosmic tree rise up to the Upper World if it did not possess robust roots in the Underworld?

It is now apparent that the *singa*, representing Naga Padoha, supports the Middle World where human beings live, as indicated by the lateral beams, *pandingdingan*, on traditional Toba houses. It is clear that they form the body of the cosmic serpent, whose head appears at the end of the beam, on the façade (fig. 55).

What is astonishing is that the Toba who owned these houses, in the Uluau region, for example, where there were still a number of villages intact in the last century (figs 53–55), some of them torn apart by government employees, already no longer knew what these monster heads on their façades represented, when Modigliani passed through the region in the 1890s. He was intrigued by these complex carvings and asked what they depicted. He later wrote: "The Toba whom I interviewed could not, with any certainty, give me information about the origin of these sculptures."³



Fig. 55 This photo (detail of the façade of the house of Raja Pane Sitorus, chieftain of the village of Lumban Binanga II, Uluau), highlights the lateral beam (*pandingdingan*), which is the body of the cosmic serpent supporting the Middle World, where human beings live. The serpent's head takes the form of the *singa ni ruma*, which is found on only one stone "horseman" statue fig. 166. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1978.

I had somewhat lost hope of having my deep-seated conviction confirmed (my old mentor Voorhoeve was sceptical and found it hard to believe that the Toba house could be a reproduction in miniature of the cosmos). Then, one day in 1995, I chatted with one Huta Silaban, a very intelligent man of forty-five and a close relation of the Toba village chieftain of Huta Sitonggitonggi, a few kilometres from Dolok Sanggul, where two ancestral statues in stone were visible, the male figure mounted on the representation of a true horse. I asked him whether there were still any traditional houses in the region between his village and Si Borongborong. He replied in the negative, then added that, as a young man, he had known of a *ruma adat* not far from his own house. It was uninhabited but still bore its *singa ni ruma*. He

told me quite casually that *singa* heads were placed at the end of the large beams supporting the building on either side. And he added spontaneously: the beam is the body of Raja Padoha, the *singa ni ruma* his head.³

Anthony and I were stunned: we had found the proof we had been seeking for almost two decades in villages with intact traditional houses, in a place where these houses had disappeared! I asked Anthony, who was about to undertake a survey in my absence of all the Kalasan villages, to question the oldest residents on the same point. I harboured few illusions, since the Kalasan had never had splendid traditional houses, unlike their remote Toba ancestors.



Fig. 56 Lid of a *guriguri* representing a woman (her identity remains unknown). Her body, like that of the quadruped *singa* that serves as her mount, is covered with scales. Horned serpents and scaly buffalo are both effigies of Naga Padoha, the great three-horned cosmic serpent that supports the world. Toba. H. 14 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

Shortly thereafter, however, Anthony wrote me that several elderly Kalasan had confirmed what their close Toba neighbour had told us. Rumang Hasogihon, ninety-five years old at the time (he was born in 1900), said that Raja Padoha supported the houses (adding nothing more), and that the monster head depicted Naga Padoha. That was confirmed by another Kalasan, Clusterman Tumanggor, then seventy-six years old, without any contact with the previous informant. He added that Raja Padoha took care of men after they had died. We had tied up all the loose threads. In 1999 I published this information in *Messages in Stone*,⁵ which deals with the monolithic sculptures of Nias, Sumba, and of the Batak.

Finally, Professor Gultom⁶ recently wrote to me that people prayed to Naga Padoha ni aji (his name among the *parmalim*) not only while digging a grave but also before undertaking any agricultural work. Here we find a similarity, perhaps fortuitous, to Shiva, another god of death who is also a god of rebirth and the source of everything that comes out of the earth.

I suggested in 1983 that the tormented appearance of the *gaja dompak* (*singa* on the façades of houses), independent of any relationship between the *singa* and Naga Padoha, may have been inspired by the sight of the Hindu-Buddhist *makara* of Si Topayan in Padang Lawas (Padang Bolak), south of Toba country. I intimated that the researches of the specialists should probably rather direct themselves towards the Hindu-Javanese motif of the *makara*, this monster with open muzzle rounded into a sort of elephant's trunk.⁷ One specialist grabbed the idea and ran with it some twenty years later, without mentioning my suggestion.⁸ I am a bit surprised by that systematic plagiarism. In the disciplines of literary history and criticism, where I am also active, such methods do not exist. One cites one's sources!

I shall add that the persistence among the Kalasan of the old *ugamo perbegu*, stemming from the cult of the souls of ancestors, leads many to adopt one of two local sects, the *agama Si Singamangaraja* or the *agama Si Raja Batak*. What could only be a single belief under two different names was certainly propagated if not founded by Raja Babiat Situmorang, village chieftain of Harianboho and comrade in arms of Si Singamangaraja XII, whom he survived by several decades. That in no way prevents them from identifying, quite reasonably, the god of the Christians with Mula Jadi na Bolon—as reported by an excellent informant, Clusterman Tumanggor.

The national church, Huria Kristen Batak Protestan, founded by Toba ministers trained



Fig. 57 Stone Pakpak Simsim statue representing a raja wearing the *gading* bracelets on his wrist. The *singa*'s bifid tongue is a rare variant. Note that the animal is harnessed like a horse. Only the enormous tongue allows for its identification.
Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire, Brussels.

by Lutheran missionaries from the Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft of Barmen, ultimately got a foothold in Kalasan country as well. For now, that Christian community trains zealous members who attend the Sunday sermons with some regularity. But here and there I have seen churches demolished and replaced by mosques. I do not believe that the number of conversions to Islam is the reason for such changes, which come about rather on orders emanating from the *bupati*, or regents (the authorities, civil servants on the Jakarta payroll, have to be Muslim).

The stone buffalo-*singa*

It is not unusual for quadrupeds to be endowed with *singa* heads. These may consist of small wood carvings, for example, stoppers of receptacles for magical products depicting a horseman (fig. 56). Among the Pakpak Simsim or Kalasan, they may be commemorative or funerary statues in stone showing an important personage astride a buffalo-*singa*,⁹ with a large tongue sticking out of its mouth (fig. 57), an avatar of Naga Padoha, discussed below. It is not surprising that nineteenth-century travellers



Fig. 58 "Equestrian" effigy of boru Sinamo, wife of Raja Tambe Boang Manalu, which came from the Pakpak Simsim village of Uruk Gantung, south-west of Salak. Private collection, United States.

such as Modigliani took that tongue to be an elephant's trunk. But careful observation establishes that it is really a tongue, since the open mouth is visible.

They are fine and beautiful examples of the style of the Pakpak Simsim. The Kalasan *mejan* are much less massive (fig. 58), smaller in most cases, though in both styles the riders' faces are very different from the representations done by the Toba of the Upper Barus (fig. 59): these are not flat or smooth but are rather endowed with a somewhat protruding nose, divided into two "slopes" by a median ridge extending over the forehead and even the mouth, down to the chin (this is visible in fig. 104, the brass knife handle presented as an example of the Toba style of the "native land").

The mount's long tongue and square-sectioned tail resting on the back of the human figure are Simsim traits, imitated by the Kalasan and the Toba of the Upper and Lower Barus. Note as well that the personage represented (fig. 59) wears above his elbow the *gading* (bracelet) that marks his status as a raja. The word *gading* means "ivory". It came to designate the bracelets of village chieftains, and though they are often made of ivory, they can also be composed of brass, silver or other materials: regardless, they are still called *gading*.

"Stone horsemen" astride *singa* were first mentioned in 1878 by von Rosenberg.¹⁰ After leaving Singkel, he saw one among the Simsim, and later, while updating his notes, he described it as being made of wood (fig. 60). Probably in the 1920s, Van Stein Callenfels photographed



Fig. 59 "Equestrian" effigy of a Toba chieftain (inland of Barus). This raja, identifiable by the bracelets he wears above the elbow, insignia of his rank, was accompanied by the seated statue of his wife. The harnessed mount is a *singa*, recognizable by its long, thick coiled tongue. H. 87 cm. Private collection. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

strange harnessed *singa* bearing two "horsemen" on their backs, the man behind and his wife in front of him.¹¹ We also found them in Kuta Penanggalan, south of Salak, among the Simsim: two couples, plus a solitary horseman and an urn formerly equipped with a cover shaped like the head of a bird (a hornbill), which is missing from our photo (fig. 62). They are the property of a lineage of the Bancin *mérga*. The *singa*'s long tongue is quite visible. They were still in place in 2009, but by May 2011 had all disappeared—stolen, according to the members of the Bancin clan that possessed them. I have sometimes found a village chieftain lamenting the loss of an ancestral statue, even though an antiquarian in Medan had photographs showing the man helping him load the sold sculpture onto a truck.

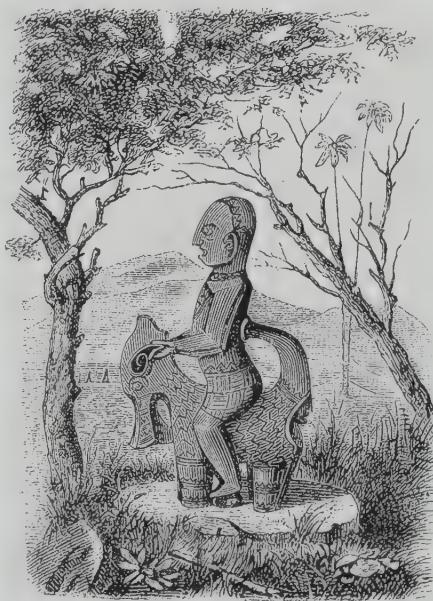


Fig. 60 This drawing was published by von Rosenberg (1878), who saw the sculpture in 1853, at the inland of Singkel.



Fig. 61 abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Jana Ansermet.

In the midst of Pakpak Simsim country, 4.7 kilometres south of Salak (the seat of the authority governing the *kecamatan* of Pakpak Bharat), is a village called Kuta Pananggalan. Its location has certainly changed over the last two centuries, since the ancestral stone monuments, which are supposed to be near the descendants of those they protect, are now about a kilometre away, separated from the village by a small river that has to be crossed with rolled-up trousers. That group of statues was identified in the early twentieth century, by Professor L. van Vuuren and Doctor P.V. Van Stein Callenfels who took photos of them, without noting their precise location. At my request, Anthony Pardede undertook research and rediscovered them, not without a great deal of difficulty. The group was composed of three

harnessed buffalo-singa, sticking out long, coiled tongues—which allowed for their identification—and with couples astride them. (I use the past tense, since by 2010 the statues had disappeared, sold, no doubt, by the Bancin [pronounced "Bantjin"] clan, which owned them). The raja was in back, his wife in front of him. There was also a lone "horsewoman", also mounted on a harnessed buffalo-singa.

A cinerary urn (photo 152 of *Messages in Stone*, drawing in fig. 141 of this volume) stood before the central sculpture of the "double horsemen" group, which supposedly depicts Raja Dehel Bancin, sixth-generation ancestor of the village chieftain in 1987, where one of my Genevan colleagues took these photos.



Fig. 62 abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Jana Ansermet.

The head of the man at right (when one faces the group) (fig. 61), on the *singa*'s croup, has disappeared. The forearm of the woman is covered by a long *gelang-gelang*, and she is holding the reins. In the middle, Raja Dehel Bancin guides the mount (fig. 62); the head of his wife is no longer in place. The third monument also shows a man still having his head, with his acephalous wife in front of him. The figure in the last statue has lost its arms. The *gelang-gelang* cannot be seen, therefore, but the villagers certify it is a woman. Nery Bancin, the owner of the statues in 1987, did not know why the sculptor had placed a couple on each *singa*. He said that "this was also done elsewhere". But there remains no trace of that in Simsim country. Only one such sculpture, made

of wood, was ever identified: of unknown origin, it disappeared in a Paris fire (fig. 136). It must have been the invention of a sculptor-magician about two hundred years ago, that is, in about 1800. If he had made other "double horsemen", they would have been discovered, unless they were broken by descendants, furious at ancestors powerless to prevent poor harvests, epidemics or other calamities. In any event, since the *mejan* of Kuta Pananggalan have disappeared, along with the nearby ones of Uruk Gantung—one of which quickly resurfaced in an American collection—we can only hope that these masterpieces have been saved.



Fig. 63 Tomb (bone receptacle) of Tuan Kaha Kaha, chieftain (*tuan*) of Silou-Bona, in north-western Simalungun.
From Tichelman and Voorhoeve 1938, fig. 48.

The ancestors astride sarcophagus lids

I shall not revisit in detail the famous large stone sarcophagi of the Toba, most of which are located on Samosir Island, on the shores of the lake. Only a few rare examples were built outside the "native land", the most distant certainly that of Raja Ompu Ollanda Manullang in Huta Sampetua, in the regency of Tapanuli Tengah, 4 kilometres from Huta Horbo and very close to the Indian Ocean. It is about 180 years old, since Raja Ompu Ollanda is separated from the current owner of the monument by six generations.

I am certain that, long ago, the Toba rajas commissioned portraits of themselves astride the lid of their sarcophagi, which represented the entire body of the *singa*, avatar of Naga Padoha.



Fig 64a Modern tomb side by side with a stone urn and an ancient sarcophagus, in Si Alangoan. North of Samosir.
abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, November 1980.

They were expecting him to transport their soul, their *begu*—or more likely, their *sumangot*—to the Upper World. One day or another, they would need the aid of the underground dragon, in answer to the prayers of their loved ones to that same god: he would allow their family to dig a grave and to deposit the remains in it, in anticipation of the bones being unearthed, washed, and transferred in great pomp to the stone receptacle.

One of the most interesting examples of that archaic type of sarcophagus is the one belonging to a *tuan*, a village chief of Simalungun, discovered by Voorhoeve. He sent me a photograph of it, well before I had heard of the Pakpak Kalasan (fig. 63). This *tuan* is an odd figure, a gnome without the pride of the



64c Detail showing the decapitated effigy of a raja of the Toba Sihaloh marga, astride the lid of the sarcophagus in Si Alangoan (figs 64a and b). abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1980.



Fig. 64b The same urn and sarcophagus as in fig. 64a, photographed thirty years later. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

Toba or Kalasan rajas, perched on the cover of a surprisingly tall sarcophagus, with sides tapering toward the top. The animal, whose rather misshapen head projects out from the lid in front, is bridled. It has two horns, and I cannot say what it could represent other than a buffalo-*singa*. Look carefully at the human figure's legs: the knees are bent, the feet facing backward, in exactly the same way that the legs of the Kalasan (and Simsims) chieftains will be, as they sit on their mounts of whatever sort. Any resemblance ends there. The name of the dead man was Tuan Kaha Kaha, and he ruled over Silou-Bona in north-west Simalungun.

That sarcophagus in Simalungun is not sufficient proof, however. We need one located in Toba country. We find it in the oldest Toba sarcophagus I know of, discovered and photographed in February 1980, where I had not expected to encounter such a monument, north-west of Samosir Island, on a grassy plateau overlooking the village of Si Tungkir. Every trace of the village, or rather the *lobu*, of Si Alangoan has disappeared, even the bulge of the *parik*. The bones of several chieftains from the Sihaloho *marga* lie in a quadrangular casket. In 1980, the lid—which completely covers the casket—bore on the lake side the representation of a lizard (the attribute animal of the “fertility spirit”, Boraspati ni Tano), and carved on the casket was a strange buffalo head: an allusion to the cosmic buffalo (fig. 3a)? Thirty years later, Helder Da Silva took photos of that rear part of the sarcophagus, which require no comment (fig. 3b). How, within thirty years, could a high relief have eroded like that? It is enough to raise doubts about the antiquity of the stone tomb, as indicated by the genealogies. Most likely, the casket was scraped clean of lichen

and covered with a brown finish, which is more clearly visible in a photo of the front part, also from 2011 (fig. 64b).¹²

On that front part (sarcophagi must turn their backs to the lake), the casket is not decorated but the lid is adorned with two large, round engraved eyes. Above them, an overly elaborate headdress may depict that formerly worn by the rajas: it is visible, well preserved on the head of the *singa* on the large sarcophagus of Huta na Godang (Parhusip *marga*) near Nainggolan, at the southern tip of Samosir,¹³ nearly opposite the Gulf of Bakkara.

On the photo of the complete sarcophagus (fig. 64a), it is not easy to make out the torso and legs of the decapitated man seated in the middle of the lid. I searched for the proper angle for a long time. Figure 64c, I believe, suggests that a “horseman” was once there (his legs and torso are visible) and that he has lost his head. The genealogies of the nearby Sihaloho who were consulted say that the tomb is thirteen generations old. It would therefore date to the sixteenth century.

To take another example: on the right side of the large sarcophagus of Tomok—its wealthy, much younger relation—is the sarcophagus of Ompu Raja Soribuntu Sidabutar, four hundred years old, according to the Sidabutar who have mastered their genealogy. The *singa* with flattened horns—which is therefore male—large eyes, and a thick-lipped mouth, the handiwork of a carver with little skill (erosion often confers on stonework a charm it did not have when brand-new; in this case, the job was botched), bears a damaged horseman astride its neck, not its back (fig. 65).¹⁴



Fig. 65 Eroded portrait of Ompu Raja Soribuntu Sidabutar in Tomok. This figure is holding onto the neck of the *singa*, rather than being mounted on the middle of its back. abm—archives barbier-mueller.

Photo by the author, 1980.



Fig. 66 The surprising bone sarcophagus of Aek Godang, discovered by van der Tuuk in 1853, is the only one in which the body of the *singa* monster rests on four feet. The squatting figure on the lid (represented riding the *singa*) is Raja Sinagabariang, for whom the ossuary was carved. Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam. Photo Petrus Voorhoeve 1939.

The monument that should remove all doubts, however, is the astonishing sarcophagus exhumed and photographed by Voorhoeve and a colleague in Aek Godang in about 1939 (fig. 66). The block in which the sarcophagus was carved comprised, in a single piece, the casket and the *singa*. Under the animal's mouth, Raja Ompu Porhas Sinagabariang had a portrait carved of his daughter. In the back was a small female head, and on the lid, relatively small, was the raja, kneeling, with a long (cloth?) headdress reaching almost to the small of his back.

Voorhoeve must have had the monument unearthed, its last owner having ordered it buried because of the inadequate blessings he had received from the ungrateful ancestor

who was given such a splendid mausoleum. Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk, on his way to Lake Toba in 1853, saw the ceremony during which the bones of Ompu Porhas, and perhaps those of his wife and other loved ones, were no doubt transferred. We therefore know the manufacture date of the monument (between 1851 and 1852). During that period, a raja would have himself portrayed under the mouth of the enormous *singa* head, which formed the front part of the giant receptacle. When the missionaries decided that these remains needed to be transferred to Christian cemeteries and ordered the sarcophagi emptied, some of them contained two or three dozen skulls and bones. In Aek Godang, there is no doubt that Ompu

Porhas, thinking of his "eternal life", took his place on the back of the deity that would carry his *begu* to the Hereafter. As it had been for the *tuan* of Simalungun, the sarcophagus in its entirety was considered to be the representation of Naga Padoha, hence equivalent to the mounts in the form of buffalo-*singa* of the Kalasan and Western Toba.

This sarcophagus, moreover, had a unique, truly interesting peculiarity. The casket did not rest directly on the ground. Four legs, tucked under (i.e. at rest), were also carved in the mass of stone. Recall Burton and Ward's phrase evoking that fabulous horned monster who bears the world "like a cow", or like the buffalo of the neighbouring Minangkabau. For that reason, and not because of its kneeling "horseman", the monument of Aek Godang possessed a particular value. It was the only sarcophagus showing the *singa* in the form of a quadruped, which could only be a "buffalo-*naga*". Note that I use the past tense. Unfortunately, that tremendous sarcophagus was smashed to pieces some fifteen years ago,¹⁵ and only the statue of Raja Porhas on a piece of sawn lid was offered to various collectors, at an outrageous price, by a German antiquarian. I do not know whether it found a taker, or where it is now housed.

Portrait of Naga Padoha as a serpent

Naga Padoha, or rather his representation, the *singa*, is present on so many carvings and so many objects that it would be nice to be able to categorize them, from the simple reptile with a large "human" head (the *pandingdingan* supporting the two sides of traditional Toba

houses figs 55 and 67) to the buffalo and elephants, quadrupeds that have kept only the god's long coiled tongue and sometimes his scales.

It seems that a monument and a receptacle for magical products can settle one question: the stone sarcophagus as a whole is the serpent-*singa* (fig. 69). It is the comparison to the *naga morsarang*, or buffalo horn that poses a challenge. What we see is an enormous head in front (it serves as a wooden stopper for the horn), a body with an arched back, which grows thinner, then straightens out, bearing, at the tip of its erect tail, a small female effigy (fig. 68).

A thousand explanations, each different from one another, have been given for the identity of the little woman sitting on the serpent's tail. It might be a deity who sees to it that Naga Padoha, god of the dead, does not commit any indiscretions. Could it be Sideak Parujar in person? I do not dare advance that hypothesis, based solely on the context of Naga Padoha's domination by the goddess. But the representation would then serve as a good complement to the scenario in which Mula Jadi aids his granddaughter, then gives her the means to control the troublemaker. Mula Jadi may bully him somewhat, but without destroying him, which would run the risk of making the cosmic edifice collapse.

Others, it is clear, may advance altogether credible hypotheses. I am sure of only one thing: it is likely that the *singa*, representative on earth of the dragon of the deep, would be placed at the front of the magic horn with the little woman at the tip of the tail and that, in

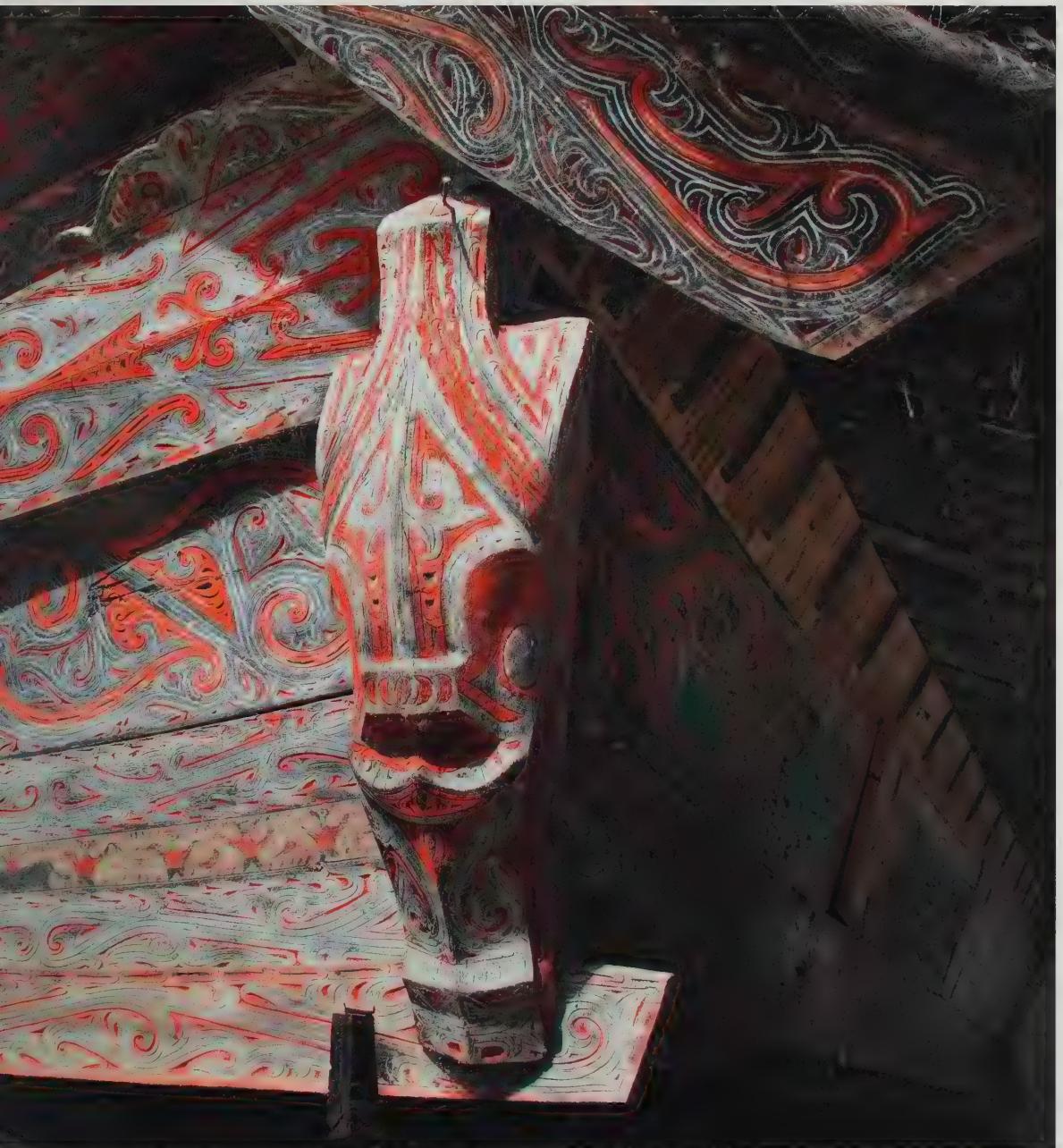


Fig. 67 House façade in Lumban Binanga. Note the beam symbolizing the body of the cosmic serpent. abm-archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

this context, the same woman would represent some entity, even while adopting a different personality in another context (the stone sarcophagus). It seems probable to me that

the *naga morsarang* (see next page), like the large sarcophagi, more or less clearly adopt the representation of the monstrous serpents and are the image of Naga Padoha.



Fig. 68 Receptacle for magic products. Buffalo horn and carved wooden stopper. Toba. Sketch by the author.

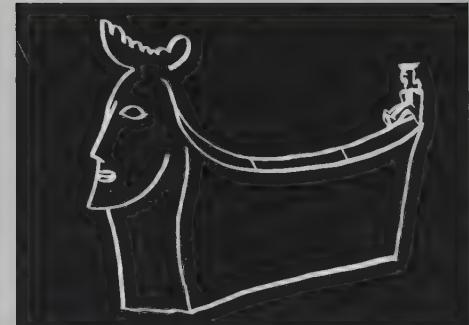


Fig. 69 Stone sarcophagus for bones, from the southern part of Samosir Island. Toba. Sketch by the author.

The concept that presided over the fabrication of this horn receptacle (about 40 centimetres long) and of the stone sarcophagus (about 4 metres long) clearly stems from the desire to show the god of the Underworld, Naga or Raja Padoha, in the form of a *singa*. I have the deep-seated conviction that in both cases, the *singa* is shown in the form of a *naga* (serpent in Sanskrit). The carver, obliged to create a bone receptacle not only for the raja who had commissioned it but also for his family members and descendants (a sarcophagus in Samosir contained about twenty skulls), had to increase the thickness of the serpent's body. But in both instances, the head of the *singa* occupies almost the entire top of the front portion, and a little woman is seated on the *naga*'s tail.

Given the relative recency of the sarcophagi (late eighteenth century)—earlier bone receptacles were large urns, round or square with a lid—I think the *datu panggana* responsible for carving the enormous blocks of stone available to them knew one thing: they had to create a *singa*, but without knowing all the physiognomic aspects that characterized it.

Most of the sarcophagi therefore have a *singa* head without the long tongue sticking out of its open mouth. Under the mouth is a human figure, sometimes male, sometimes female. During my first research in the 1970s, I was told that the figure

under the maw of the sarcophagus of Tomok was "an Aceh soldier". Elsewhere, the man was the raja himself. Or it was the *datu panggana* who had done the work. As for the small woman seated on the "tail", the most interesting explanation is that she was an old woman endowed with magical gifts, who sat on the uncarved block as it was being transported to the village, to make it lighter to move. In my view, the most logical explanation is that the woman is an image of the goddess Sideak Parujar, who subdued Naga Padoha. That is a response that no one has ever given me and that I therefore should forget. I think, however, that gratuitous hypotheses should not be kept secret, out of fear one will look like a dilettante who mistakes his desires for realities.

Some have maintained that the sarcophagi are shaped like barks, Toba houses, or something of the sort. It seems to me they are simply the bodies of *singa* in their serpent form. The sarcophagus of Aek Godang rested on four feet: in that case we are dealing with a buffalo-serpent (I have shown that the body of the horned buffalo-*singa* was sometimes covered with serpent's scales). But I cannot repeat often enough that we are in the realm of hypotheses, and my conviction, however appealing, is not supported by any proof. Once the crates of documents that van der Tuuk brought back to Leiden are deciphered, will they shed light on these points? It is urgent that they be translated, as I keep repeating.



Fig. 70 Large Pakpak Simsim statue of unknown origin, representing a male figure wearing a headdress or helmet. The mount is a hybrid, a massive quadruped whose muzzle bears a well-modelled human face (see detail fig. 74). The animal's maw, open wide, displays teeth and the long coiled tongue characteristic of the *singha* in the form of a horned buffalo. H. 99 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.



Fig. 71 This female statue forms a couple with the horseman fig. 70. H. 79 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.



Fig. 72 Pair of "equestrian" effigies photographed by Dr Voorhoeve in Pakpak country in the 1930s. The tusks prove that the mounts are elephants. Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam. Photo Petrus Voorhoeve.



Fig. 73 These ruins are all that remained of the "horsemen" above in 1987. Santar Jehe, not far from Salak, in Pakpak Simsim country. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Jana Ansermet, 1987.

The two-faced buffalo-singa: Human and animal

A rather bulky "horseman", not at all slender like those of the Kalasan, but achieving a proper balance, is held in the collections of the Quai Branly Museum (fig. 70). The raja is accompanied by his wife, carved separately and mounted on a tiny animal sporting the curved tongue characterizing the *singa* and the horns curving back over the head (fig. 71). Having come from the antiques market in Brussels in about 1970, they tell us nothing about their

place of origin. I shall not conceal the fact that the identification of this couple has always been problematic for me. The man's flat face, his heavy lower jaw, and his massive arms and legs lead us far from the Toba of the Upper and Lower Barus, as well as from the Kalasan, whose *mejan* (when they are intact) still retain the remote elegance of the ancient Toba style.

We most certainly have before us the work of a Pakpak Simsim sculptor from the area around Salak, where in about 1939 Voorhoeve was able

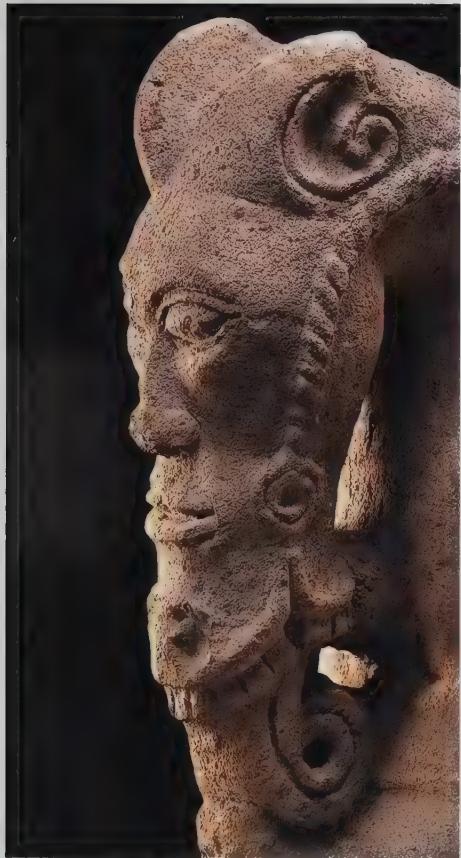


Fig. 74. Muzzle detail of the mount of the *mejan* (fig. 70) with a "double face"; human on the muzzle and animal at the site of the buffalo's mouth. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.



Fig. 75. Detail of the sheath of a magician's knife (*piso ni datu*) collected in Samosir in 1970. The ears, shaped like small horns, resemble those of the *singa* in the previous figure. The tongue is bifid, like that of the *mejan* in fig. 57. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

to photograph rather similar *mejan*, one male and one female (fig. 72), except that they are mounted on true elephants equipped with tusks. They are still there, in a state of ruin (fig. 73). Today the horsemen are acephalous.

The extraordinary thing about the Quai Branly "horseman" is the animal's head. Meticulously carved on the long muzzle is a very complete, realistic human face, even though the animal's maw, with visible teeth, has not been omitted. From this maw the usual thick tongue character-

izing the *singa* sticks out (figs 70 and 74). Without a doubt, the *datu panggana* who created that monument wanted to express the hidden identity of the *singa* and therefore displayed on the buffalo muzzle the face of the god that rules the Underworld, Naga Padoha. It is strange that these "buffalo" never have horns, which are reserved for the *naga*, mythical serpents, such as the one forming the main beam of houses, the *pandingdingan* (see fig. 67), or for the sculpted lid of the *naga morsarang*. On the mount in question, note the odd spiral form of the ears. Are these the

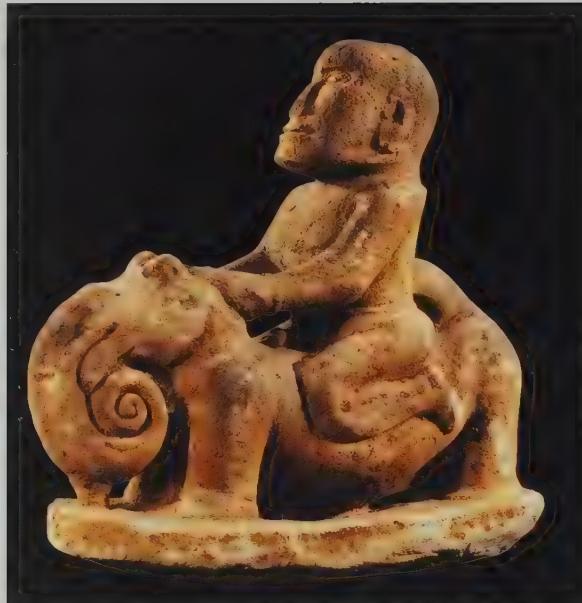


Fig. 76 Equestrian effigy in stone. Pakpak Simsim. Mandala Collection. Photo courtesy Achim Sibeth.

Mounts that take the form of true elephants are rare among the Pakpak and non-existent among the Toba of the Upper and Lower Barus. Achim Sibeth and Bruce W. Carpenter reproduce two of these, among the five stone equestrian figures belonging to the remarkable Mandala Collection.¹ Even though the pachyderm does not have its characteristic large ears, there is no doubt it sports a trunk, not a coiled tongue. That is particularly apparent in the case of the second "horseman" (Sibeth and Carpenter 2008, V12), which is not reproduced here, where the profile view reveals an open mouth, without a tongue, underneath the trunk. The tusks are short and in high relief, as is also the case for the *mejan* photographed before 1939, and again in the 1980s (figs 72–73), which are still located in the vicinity of Salak in Simsim country. Since Sibeth is the best specialist on the Toba working today, and since he did no field research among the Pakpak, the attribution of these sculptures to the Toba is altogether excusable since their *mejan* are almost the same (see fig. 59). In actuality, the one reproduced here is characteristic of the Pakpak Simsim style, in the massiveness of the monument overall, the thickness of the arms and legs, and the face. The men wear bracelets but not the single *gading* above the elbow, the mark of the rank of Toba rajas.² Let us also note that the wife of the man in Sibeth and Carpenter's figure V12 of the Mandala Collection is riding a smaller animal (this is common), whose horns she holds in her hands.

This is certainly a *singa* in the form of a buffalo, as indicated by the thick tongue sticking out of its mouth. None of the facial features, shown in profile and frontally, could have come from the hands of a Toba *datu panggana*.

A comparison between the coiled trunk of the Simsim equestrian statue from the Mandala Collection (fig. 76), and the coiled tongue of the buffalo-*singa* on the Kalasan *mejan* of Raja Tinambunan (fig. 77b) leads me to ask two questions (which, unfortunately, no one is in a position to answer). First, did the Pakpak who followed the teachings of Guru Kalasan begin by sculpting elephants, which then quickly became buffalo-*singa*, to which they attributed the elephant's coiled trunk in the form of a tongue (that of the cosmic serpent Naga Padoha, of which the *singa* is also a representation)? And second, did not the Pakpak and certain Toba (see the "horseman" of Pageran Ri moved to Huta Poraha, fig. 169 in this volume) always seek to carve mounts representing *singa*, the only mythical animal charged with transporting the souls of important personages, while endowing them with tusks and even a trunk, but never with large ears—though these are easy to render in high relief—so as to create a hybrid animal, a *singa* that at the same time bears a few traits of the elephant, which is associated with the idea of power? As Sibeth has recently written: "There is a definite connection between the *naga*, *singa* and elephant in the Batak ritual."³ If we have buffalo with scaly bodies and horned serpents, why would we not have all the variants imaginable? Back in the time of the *sipelebegu*, that was obvious to everyone: the daily life of the Batak was pervaded by evil or protective spirits, and symbols were abundant, as decipherable as the alphabet is for us. An illegible writing is all that remains now, for anyone not familiar with the mythical and magical connections between, on one hand, the Upper World and the Underworld, and, on the other, the Middle World, where the modern Batak have adopted different beliefs.

1. Sibeth and Carpenter 2008, figs V10 and V12.

2. There are exceptions. For example, the *mejan* of Pageran Ri (Huta Poraha) (fig. 169) shows a raja wearing a *gading* on his wrist, like fig. 76.

3. Sibeth and Carpenter 2008, p. 21.

suggestion of horns? I do not believe so. This face should be compared with the one decorating the muffle of a Toba *singa* in wood (fig. 75) forming the handle of a beautiful knife. The similarity is striking.

A Kalasan *mejan* in a hoard adjacent to the house of the village chieftain of Huta Nusa, north of Parlilitan, has no ears and not even horns in an embryonic state. It was so conscientiously scrubbed of lichen that the stone has regained its original beige colour, which for a moment led me to doubt its antiquity (I have not seen it in person: it was discovered in about 2003 by Anthony Pardede and photographed in March 2011 by Helder Da Silva [fig. 77a]). The human face carved on the muzzle, with a strange, enormous mouth equipped with teeth, and with the arch of the eyebrows clearly indicated and extended by the line of the nose, is quite visible. In profile (fig. 77b), we see the dragon's maw, open like the petals of a lily, and a tongue sticking out, coiled into a spiral (an unusual feature at this point). That "horseman", whose face is largely inexpresive, may be the eponymous founder and ancestor of the Tinambunan *marga*.

Were the Pakpak Simsim the inventors of the "double face"? Such a human face exists, strangely resembling that of the stone "buffalo", on a knife acquired in Tomok¹⁶ (fig. 78) and therefore presumably Toba (unless it was

Fig. 77a Equestrian portrait of Raja Tinambunan, son of Tuan Nahoda Raja Simbolon, brother of Raja Tanggor, Raja Pinayungan, and Raja Nahampun, carved by an apparently inexperienced *datu panggana*. The profile (fig. 77b) clearly shows the existence of a second animal mouth, with a tongue sticking out and coiled into a spiral. But the human face depicted on the muzzle is very inept, when compared to the face of the buffalo-singa in fig. 70.
abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.





Fig. 77b Profile view of the equestrian statue of Raja Tinambunan. abm–archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Fig. 78 Wooden magician's knife (*piso ni datu*). A detail of it is reproduced fig. 75. Note the complexity of the decoration on the sheath. The figure's head and chest (handle) are encrusted with small human teeth. H. 32.5 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm–archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

imported from Dairi); it too is in the collections of the Quai Branly Museum. The detail of this face is reproduced next to the face of the large *singa* of the supposedly Simsim stone *mejan* (fig. 75). This is a very ancient object, encrusted with the teeth of a human child and displaying an undeniable Pakpak influence, for example, in the tucked-up legs on either side of the mount and the long curved torso.¹⁷ Might it have been sculpted by a Toba *datu panggana* who apprenticed among the Simsim and who, having returned home, took advantage of a human

sacrifice to remove the victim's teeth and a little *pupuk*, his aim being to give greater efficacy to his dagger, his *piso ni datu*, which thereby became a *pangulubalang*? Such an offensive magic weapon could take various forms. The form was inconsequential, in fact, since only the magic charge conferred on it both a defensive and an aggressive power. In any event, the face carved on the muzzle strongly resembles that of the Simsim stone "horseman's" mount mentioned above; it also provides us with a new vision of the *singa*, this time as a buffalo god.

Notes

1. The late Dr Voorhoeve thought that this designation ought to be translated as "dragon on its nest", the word *sarang* having been borrowed from Malay (it has a different meaning in Toba).
2. Petrus Voorhoeve 1940, pp. 339–56.
3. "I Toba che interrogai non seppero dirmi nulla di sicuro sul'origine di quelle sculture", Modigliani 1892, p. 41.
4. Barbier-Mueller 1983, p. 77.
5. This is actually the catalogue for the exhibition of stone monuments from the collections of the Barbier-Mueller Museum, which were shown in various cities, including Hanover, and which are now in the Quai Branly Museum in Paris. The *pandingdingan* as representation of Naga Padoha, is discussed in the catalogue on p. 90 and 149.
6. Communication of 19 March 2011.
7. Barbier-Mueller 1983, pp. 84, 91, figs 88bis, 89 and 89bis.
8. Achim Sibeth in Sibeth and Carpenter 2007, p. 62.
9. I have not translated the word "buffalo" (*horbo*) into Toba, because that would be betraying the Toba, who never use the expression "buffalo-singa", and because that concept itself, though obvious to their ancestors—who represented horned serpents and buffalo with scaly bodies—has been forgotten by them. See the questionnaire p. 65: you truly get the feeling they do not see the matter very clearly and are not very comfortable with the subject.
10. Von Rosenberg 1878.
11. There is a photograph of these "double horsemen" in an article by E. F. Karl Schiller published in Warneck 1912, which shows them protected by a shelter covered with *ijuk*, fibre from the trunk of a wild sugar palm, used to cover houses.
12. That 2011 photo shows that someone broke one of the elements on the lid, which was then replaced by a cement part painted white. The torso of the "horseman" was lying next to the monument. Helder Da Silva picked it up and temporarily set it back in place.
13. See fig. 128 in Barbier-Mueller 1983.
14. In 2011, the "developers" of the tourist site of Tomok cut down the large tree sheltering the sarcophagi and surrounded them with a wall of large blocks (seemingly made of red ceramic), forever destroying the melancholic beauty of a peaceful spot, where I remained for a long time in 1974, alone with my wife, during my first visit to Toba country. How sad, especially since the sarcophagi are now exposed to the rain.

15. Although it was not far from a road I often took, bad luck prevented me from ever seeing it. I took the road a first time (crossing a deep ravine on two rails) while driving toward Aek Godang. After a few kilometres, I found myself facing a pile of rocky debris that had wiped out the road. The second time, the rails that had allowed me to cross the ravine were gone. Later I learned of the monument's sad fate.

16. That acquisition was made by Thomas Murray, an American antiquarian and a very good connoisseur of Indonesian works. He purchased the knife in about 1970 in one of the street stalls close to the large sarcophagus of Tomok, where, from the late 1960s on, it was possible to acquire beautiful old objects from the villages of Samosir.

17. Two similar knives are part of the Mandala Collection published by Sibeth and Carpenter 2008, p. 62.

Rice fields in Kalasan country, district of Parlilitan. Ever since cement became available in the village (about 1920), the tombs, here taking the form of traditional Toba houses (unknown in the Kalasan villages), have multiplied. They are erected on mountainsides and in cultivated fields, since the ancestors are supposed to render them fertile. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Chapter V The old religion of the Toba, *ugamo perbegu*





Fig. 80 Toba village of Lumban Binanga. To the left, houses with roofs covered in *ijuk* (fibres from the trunks of wild sugar palms), at right rice granaries (*sopo*) with outside ladders. These granaries have often been transformed into residences. The sacred fig tree at the end of the central square (*alaman*) disappeared long ago. abm-archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.

THE OLD RELIGION OF THE TOBA, *UGAMO PERBEGU*

Followers of the traditional Toba religion¹ were called *sipelebegu*, from the verb *pele* (to make an offering) and the noun *begu* (soul of the dead). They prayed to the god of the Upper World, Mula Jadi na Bolon, and to his three sons. They also prayed to Naga Padoha, god of the Underworld. But they made offerings and sacrifices only to the souls of their ancestors, their intercessors with the deities. That belief is still alive, accounting for the large number of cement tombs, sometimes adopting the shape of small houses, strewn throughout the valleys (see pp. 96–97).

That “religion of the ancestral souls” throws open the door and allows us to examine the difference within the *ugamo perbegu*² between the souls of living men (*tondi*) and the souls of the dead (*begu*). That distinction is fundamental for understanding the daily life of the Toba Batak, which was governed by the fear of committing a blunder and incurring the wrath of a god, a “nature spirit”, or especially, an ancestor. Ancestors were held responsible for the calamities that might affect their descendants. The sarcophagus of Aek Godang, for example, was buried by a raja who believed that his ancestor was not rendering the equivalent of the offerings made to him. Sarcophagi tipped over

into ravines were a well-known phenomenon, occurring especially when someone lost at a game of chance: the Toba are rabid dice and chess players, who sometimes even became the slaves of their creditors.

The *tondi*: The souls of living men

It is not only men who have a soul (*tondi* in Toba and Kalasan, *tendi* in Pakpak and Karo). Warneck is particularly loquacious on this delicate subject. Certain myths say that, upon the birth of a human being, Mula Jadi tears off a leaf from the Jambubarus tree, which is located in the Upperworld and is not to be confused with the *harihara*, the cosmic tree, formerly represented in each village by a sacred fig (*ficus religiosa*) that had been planted on the central square (*alaman*) before the houses were built. It is often said that the *harihara* was situated in the middle of the square separating the houses from the rice granaries. In all the Toba villages I visited that still had their *harihara*, however, the sacred fig was planted at the far end of the square.

Mula Jadi na Bolon, then, inscribes a man's fate on the Jambubarus leaf and delivers it to the *tondi*, which then travels to the Middle World and insinuates itself into the newborn, whose life course on earth is henceforth fixed. Sometimes a man's acts do not please his *tondi*. The *tondi* always prevails. If a man possesses the capacity to rule, to be the leader of a community, it is because his *tondi* possesses that ability, known as *harajaon*. Should the man be born in a village where several of the members of the *raja marga* also have that innate quality, *harajaon*, he has to prove his superiority over his competitors,

through his gifts as a magician (*hadatuon*), for example.

Warneck says clearly that not only men but also animals and even inanimate objects possess a *tondi*: houses (*ruma adat*), boats (*solu*), horses (*hoda*), tigers (*babiat*), water buffalo (*horbo*), dogs (*asu*), and so on.³ In addition, trees and other plants have a *tondi*. It is not by chance that, in many regions of Island Southeast Asia, rice is cut with a special knife, whose blade takes the form of a sharpened half-moon: one must not hurt the rice's *tondi*. I have not heard or read anywhere that Mula Jadi takes the trouble to note down on the leaf of a tree the fate of an animal or plant.

It is not the man who is intelligent, skilful or a good hunter: it is his *tondi* that possesses these qualities. As a result, everyone takes great care not to offend or anger his *tondi*. He makes sacrifices to it. If it leaves him (which is known to occur), he is nothing. Worn out, incapable of acting in any capacity whatever, all he can do is ask for help from a *datu*, who himself often appeals to a *sibaso* (medium) to enter into contact with the spirit world, in an attempt to know what has happened. This is shamanism pure and simple, as Mircea Eliade has described it among various peoples.⁴

The *tondi* is at work everywhere, aware of everything. If the newborn is not given a name that suits his *tondi*, it will be upset, dissatisfied, and the child will be sick. Sometimes, when a marriage takes place, the groom's *tondi* is not in harmony with the bride's. It can be as trivial as their two names not "getting along". Consulting a *datu* who specialized in divination is a possibility, to learn (before the wedding) whether the two names will be acceptable to the *tondi* in question. In fact, every Toba is in some sense tyrannized

by his *tondi*. If he feels ill, it is because his *tondi* is angry, or worse, because it has left his body. That requires a further (very costly) consultation with the *datu*, to learn why it left, where it went, and how to make it come back, generally through the sacrifice of small animals (chickens or pigs).

Everyone who has read Eliade's fundamental book on shamanism knows that illnesses triggered by an indiscretion of the soul exist in many regions of the globe, especially among the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest (the Haida, Tlingit and others) and that they are widespread in Siberia. We know of various practices of shamans who have mastered the techniques of ecstasy. Such was not the case for the Toba *datu*: he turned to a medium. Karo guru, by contrast, were able to go into a trance. When a man dies (regardless of whether his relations with his *tondi* were good or tumultuous), the *tondi* does not follow its "bearer" into the Hereafter to become the soul or spirit that his descendants revere. The *tondi* returns to Mula Jadi, to be assigned to another newborn, if necessary, it seems, with a change in its "programming". Then the *begu*, the soul of the deceased, makes its appearance. Let me first explain, however, what acts on the souls of certain individuals to place them above their peers.

The *sahala*

The *sahala* is a "special power", an "innate gift" animating the *tondi* and, as a result, the one invested by the *tondi*. It is, however, completely separate from the individual.

The raja's *tondi*, like that of the *datu*, must possess a positive, invisible quality that cannot

escape the attention of others. Some men, who distinguished themselves by notable acts, were obviously in possession of a powerful *sahala*, which was therefore not reserved for chieftains and magicians alone.

As for the raja, his ability to be the leader of the community (*harajaon*) depends on the *sahala* of his *tondi*. That *sahala*, first and foremost, earns him respect, inspired by his attitude, his natural majesty. He belongs to a lineage with many men and fewer women. Having sons is a sign of virility. Obviously, such a man is a *raja na mora na gok*, he is rich. He has been born into a well-off family and, through his abilities as a tradesman, a farmer of fertile rice fields, or a breeder of fine water buffalo or horses, he improved his financial situation a great deal. In wartime, he is courageous, a good soldier and tactician, because skilled in the art of preparing a good plan (*martahi*). He possesses a keen intelligence (*habisuhon*, from *bisuk*, intelligent, shrewd), and those placed under his authority thrive.

Aside from the circumstance of having been defeated by an enemy village, any raja who went broke gambling, who suffered poor harvests, or whose character eventually weakened, would be driven out by his subjects: his *sahala* required it. The *raja i ma nampuna adat dohot uhum* makes sure that customary law (*adat*) is observed and imposes justice (*uhum*) in the case of violations,⁵ and that is an impossible task for someone who is not superior to those he oversees. In the northern part of Samosir, near Huta Silalahi, someone pointed out to me a neighbouring village whose name had been changed about a hundred years before because

the raja had taken to drink. He was expelled and replaced by a member of a *marga boru*, an energetic man obviously possessing the *sahala* necessary to make a good sovereign. As a result, that man's former *marga boru* became the *marga raja* of the village, even while remaining the *marga boru* of the old *marga raja*.

Datu (magicians, healers, diviners) of renown possessed an equivalent quality, called *hadatuon*. Similarly, when it emerged that Si Singamangaraja had become the "teacher [of the word] of God" (*malim ni Debata*), his *tondi* was considered to be imbued with a quality that had arisen spontaneously, the *hamalimon*. Without it, the *malim* religion could not have been founded, and that is probably the reproach implicitly made to the religions known as *agama Si Singamangaraja* and *agama*

Si Raja Batak: the souls of their founders did not have a *sahala* commensurate with the importance of such an invention. No doubt as well, that is the reason that Raja Marnangkok Naipospos, the *induk punguan* of the *parmalim*, prophesies that the followers of these two "religions" will sooner or later join the *ugamo malim*.

Souls of the dead (*begu*, *sumangot*, *sombaon*) and "nature spirits"

The soul, *begu*, of a dead man is not the *tondi* he possessed during his lifetime. The *tondi* does not follow him into the Hereafter. The Toba express this clearly, saying that the *begu* is the *tondi ni na mate*, the soul of the deceased, which appears at the moment the man expires.

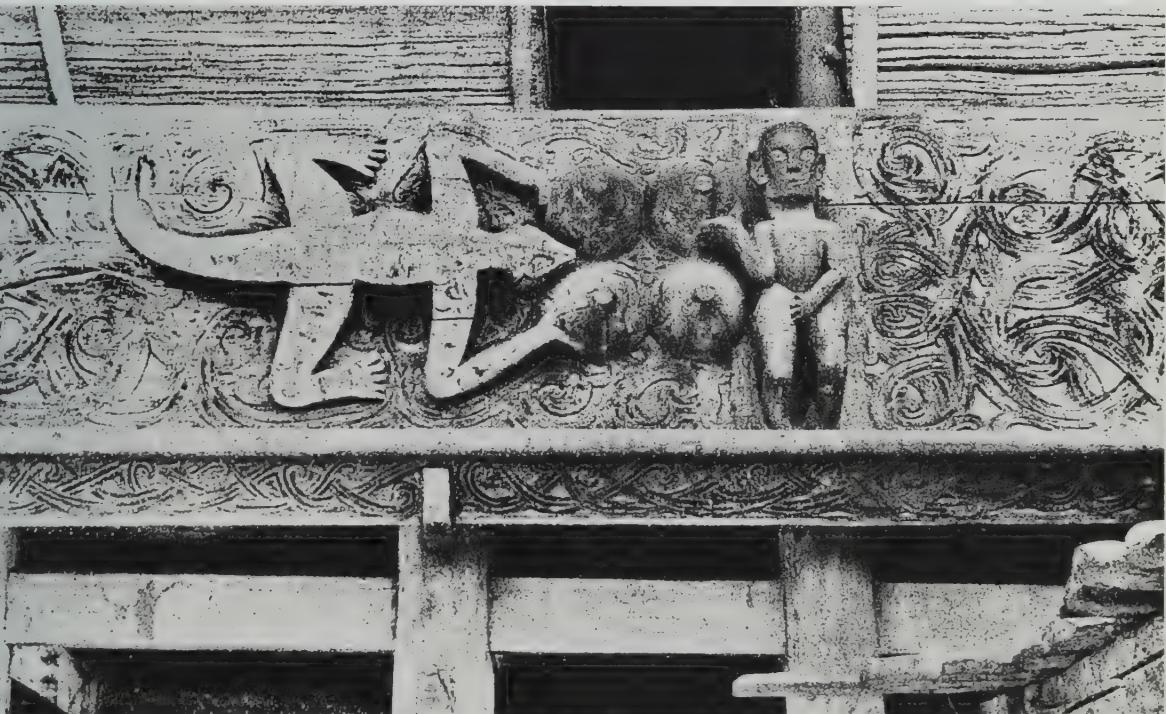


Fig. 81 Board from a Toba house, decorated with motifs carved in very high relief. Whereas the lizard (representing the fertility god Boraspati ni Tano) is fairly common, human figures are rare. Photo Johannes Winkler 1925.

The spirit world is heavily populated, and some *begu* there are not the souls of people who have died. These are “nature spirits”, sometimes benevolent, sometimes malevolent. The word *begu* can thus lead to confusion, and it is always necessary to determine which kind of *begu* is at issue.

This is the occasion to note that secondary deities, situated between the *begu* and the gods, live in the Middle World, where, it is thought, they were sent when Mula Jadi na Bolon recalled all the gods to the Upper World—unless they were already in the Middle World at that crucial moment and did not return to the Upper World. I shall devote only a few more lines to them. One of the best known of these demigods is Boraspati



Fig. 82 Toba rice granary door, decorated—as always—with the lizard representing Boraspati ni Tano, fertility god. Hardwood. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.



Fig. 83 Toba mortar, called *pepene*, or *losung ni datu* when it belonged to a magician and was used to grind sacred herbs and other secret substances. On the lid, Boraspati ni Tano's lizard. On the front of the hollow part, a *singa* head. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Wolfgang Puiver.

ni Tano, responsible for the fertility of the fields, whose avatar is a large lizard, often represented on the façades of the *sopo* or on the doors to the granary proper (fig. 82), on the top floor of the *sopo*. I saw one in 1974 in Aek Natolu, between Parapat and Porsea,⁶ and then never saw another, since they were the first architectural elements to be sold off. They are also found on domestic mortars (*losung hau*) made of wood (fig. 83). Small lizards (*ilik*) encountered in Toba country are never killed. They might be demigods, or close to it. Another well-known “spirit” is boru Saniang Naga. According to Warneck, she is a true deity, apparently the only one who remained on earth when Mula Jadi brought Sideak Parujar and her husband back to the Upperworld and definitively separated it from the Middle World. She is also described as a goddess in the *malim* religion.

According to the Toba of the “native land” (Samosir and environs), boru Saniang lives in Lake Toba. The designation “naga” is enough to indicate her connection to the “world of the gods,” since that term applies only to the great cosmic serpent supporting the earth, Naga Padoha, and to certain creatures related to him.

The word *naga* is used only in mythology and designates a god or spirit taking the form of a serpent. The usual term in Toba to designate snakes found in nature is *ulok*.

Let me briefly mention the other "nature spirits". The *homang* are important ones, goblins of a sort who enjoy making the lives of villagers difficult. No one has ever seen them, and they are not overly feared. But people make offerings to them to protect themselves from their mischief. Certain "spirits" supposedly dwell in the forests: these are the *sinombah*. They are collectively called *begu*, the same word used for the souls of the departed, which can give rise to confusion. The task of the *datu* is precisely to protect his

community from the malicious acts of the *begu*, by fashioning *pagar* (defensive fetishes), which could assume any number of forms: statuettes with a square hole in the chest for inserting some magical mixture (fig. 84), which were kept in place by square-sectioned pieces of wood planted in the hole. A large stone could also be a *pagar*, to which the *datu* gave instructions. Furthermore, the Toba wore talismans on their persons (especially when they took a journey). Some large men's rings in brass represent the *singa* in the form of a coiled serpent. If you look carefully, you will always see a little piece of black iron encrusted in a brass crown, and elsewhere, an incrustation of copper. In that way, the three sacred colours are brought together, since brass



Fig. 84 Three Toba statuettes possessing the protective or magical function of a *pagar* (defensive fetish). A square hole in the central statuette allowed the object to receive a magical charge. Photo Linden-Museum, Stuttgart.

is light enough in colour to fulfil the function of white, copper is red, and iron black (figs 85a–b). Such a talisman, small in size and worn on a daily basis, is called a *taoar*. One informant, Guru Karel Sibuea, added that the *taoar* was not the complete ring but only the small piece of iron or copper inserted into it. The three colours made the object sacred.

Si Singamangaraja XII, military and religious leader

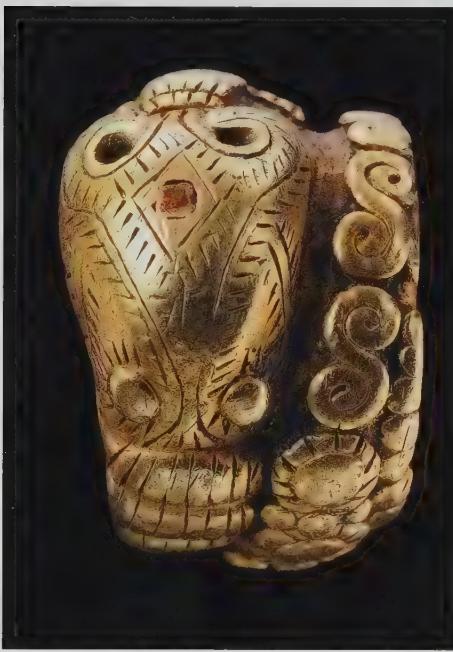
No raja was superior to another, except temporarily, or because he was presiding over a religious ceremony involving several *marga* living within a single territory during the *bius* celebration. But there was an exception: the notorious Si Singamangaraja XII, born in 1846. The authority of this figure, a fierce adversary of the Dutch colonial troops, stemmed from the hereditary supernatural gifts attributed to him and to his unrivalled talents as a magician, thanks to which he managed to federate a number of villages and perhaps entire *marga* (though this is doubtful), members of the Sumba moiety, descending from Raja Isumbahon. His own *marga* belonged to that moiety; for, though the dynasty of the twelve Si Singamangarajas claimed a mythic origin, a close and ancient relationship to Raja Utì, king of Barus (included in *parmalim* prayers), they actually belonged to a mere clan of modest dimensions, the Sinambela *marga*, who lived in Bakkara (or Bangkara), near the southwest shore of Lake Toba, and who practised the traditional religion, *ugamo perbegu*.

Whatever those who venerate Si Singamangaraja XII—particularly the followers of the *malim* religion—may now say, he was not the “king”

of all the Toba, as some works intended for tourists would have it. He was, however, a man of great moral worth, a born leader, who earned the honour of having one of the most important avenues in Medan named after him. Furthermore, he was descended from a dynasty to which the *parmalim* attribute the great powers of Si Singamangaraja I, who lived in the sixteenth century. In reality, only the reputation of Si Singamangaraja X (grandfather of the last king so named) as a warrior and magician is historically attested. All the rest are nothing but legends, as they exist in other religions, and which are transformed into truths.

At the political level, Singamangaraja XII managed to impose his authority as commander of the Toba determined to resist forced colonization to the very end. That colonization was the result of a treaty signed by Holland in the mid-nineteenth century, in which it renounced, in favour of England, any colonial claim in Africa, in exchange for the right to seize Island Southeast Asia.

Si Singamangaraja appointed priests and priestesses (*parbaringin*), who wore special long garments, and, as headdresses, standing atop their chignons, a fairly tall branch taken from a tree called the *baringin*, which was viewed as sacred. Both men and women were able to propagate the word of Si Singamangaraja, a prophet or even a demigod (it was said, for example, that he had a hairy tongue), and a magician capable of the most extraordinary feats. Old photos of groups of *parbaringin* (figs 86a–b) appear relatively often, with no mention of these individuals’ special function. After the death of their leader in



Figs 85a and b Chieftain's brass ring representing a *singa* in the form of a coiled serpent. A piece of copper (right) and another of black iron (left) made it a talisman (*taoar*). According to some authors, the inverted double spirals can be attributed to the influence of the Dong Son civilization of Vietnam, but in fact that motif could have been invented autonomously. Diam. 3.1 cm. Private collection. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photos Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

1907, they undoubtedly played a role in the founding of the so-called *ugamo malim*, by far the most important religion in Samosir and south of Lake Toba.

The *malim* religion

The sources consulted by Doris Gröpper led her to claim (wrongly) that the sect of the *permalim* (or *permalim*, or *pormalim*) was founded on Si Singamangaraja's orders by a "high ranking *datu* at [his] court"⁷: Guru Somalaing Pardede. That rather astonishing individual was the guide for the intrepid Modigliani between 1889 and 1891, taking him as far as Bakkara, the residence of Si Singamangaraja XII. I do not think Gröpper is correct and believe J. H. Meerwaldt instead: in

1901, he mentioned that Guru Somalaing had appeared in Balige in 1891, having separated himself from Si Singamangaraja and wishing to preach a new belief system. He declared, first, that he had received from God a command to aid the missionaries, basing himself on the story of Noah and his three sons. He evolved toward teaching a kind of "purification", which owed a great deal to Islam.⁸ Authors other than Meerwaldt (those who inspired Gröpper) provide a different image of Guru Somalaing Pardede, calling him one of the founders of the *malim* religion. That claim is vigorously denied by the current high priest of the *permalim*, Raja Marnangkok Pardede: he does not have words harsh enough for that "guide for young ladies, that troublemaker".⁹



Fig. 86a Priestesses (*parsanggul na ganjang*). Near Si Hotang, Samosir. Photo Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam.

In 1896 Guru Somalaing was arrested by the Dutch and deported to Borneo.¹⁰ Curiously, a certain Raja na Siakbagi from the highlands of Toba country succeeded Somalaing, according to Helbig. A *datu* like his predecessor, he quickly became popular and was dubbed by Si Singamangaraja himself.¹¹ His sect, called *parsiakbagi*, was divided into a number of branches, very much like the *malim* religion.¹² In about 1900, he too was captured by the Dutch. D. W. N. de Boer, writes Gröpper,¹³ did not say whether he died in prison. Helbig noted that the *parmalim* considered Raja na Siakbagi an incarnation of Si Singamangaraja.¹⁴ That is now taken for a certainty within the *malim* church. The *induk punguan* Raja Marnangkok Naipospos explains that, when Si Singamangaraja saw he was about to be defeated by the Dutch, he asked

from then on to be called "Raja Nasiakbagi".¹⁵ The *ugamo malim* recommends that its followers, the *parmalim*, worship ancestors and gods, and Si Singamangaraja serves as an intercessor for the faithful.

That view was accepted by all, because Si Singamangaraja was imbued with a special *sahala*, conferring on him the *hamalimon*, which should be translated as "faculty for teaching" (meaning implicitly, "for teaching the word of God": the term *malim* is a corruption of the Arabic word for teacher, *mwaālim*). It was then that Raja Sutan Mulia Naipospos succeeded him, having received a letter from Si Singamangaraja himself confirming him as leader of the *parmalim*, as Gröpper rightly states.¹⁶

It would be unwarranted to recount here the development of *malim*, sometimes called a "sect"



Fig. 86b Priestess. Near Si Hotang, Samosir. Photo Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam.

even by recent authors, and which, I believe, merits the name of “church”—not because it professes a “religion” but because it has a central organization (with buildings in Huta Tinggi and Huta Naipospos, near Porsea) and priests dispersed throughout a large part of Toba country. That is truer, obviously, south of the lake, in Hombung, Uluan, Habinsaran and Samosir, than in the Silindung Valley, where Christianity has long been strongly implanted, or in the western region of Toba country, between the lake and the Indian Ocean. There Christianity is rather superficially present, or so it seemed to me, but perhaps I have a tendency to generalize what I saw among the Toba and Kalasan of the Upper Barus. I recommend Ibrahim Gultom’s recent book on the *agama malim* (fig. 87),¹⁷ which makes this point

definitively, and would be useful even for people in the capital. On 16 August 2010, as it happens, the daily *Jakarta Post* published a long, detailed article on the ceremonies of the *permalim* [sic], erroneously saying of that religion: “*Malim* is believed to be the Batak ethnic group’s oldest religion, practised long before Christianity was brought in by the Dutch colonial missions.” Yet the first high priest of the *malim* religion was the grandfather of the man currently holding that position. It is equally false to say that the Dutch introduced Christianity in colonizing the archipelago: German missionaries had already been at work there for decades. It is true, however, that toward the end of the nineteenth century, faced with the unwillingness of certain Batak groups, German missionaries appealed to Dutch soldiers to aid them impose their faith by force of arms. Driven by their unshakeable faith, they brought “light” to the indigenous peoples—by burning down their villages.

One god of the old Toba pantheon can still be found in the *malim* religion, with different attributions but with a role clearly indicating that he is lord of everything beneath the Middle World. Naga Padoha is still worshipped by the *permalim*, though they have changed his place of residence and his name, calling him “Nagapadohanaiji”, literally, the “Serpent Padoha [master] of magic”.¹⁸ Professor Gultom writes of that deity: “Although he still possesses powers on earth, that does not mean he has always remained in the *Banua Tonga* [Middle World]. He has spent time with other deities in the *Banua Ginjang* [Upper World], accompanying *Debata* [that is, Mula Jadi na Bolon].”¹⁹ And he adds: “Nagapadohanaiji must also be honoured every time someone wants to make use of the earth,

before ploughing the fields or digging a grave, for example.²⁰ And he makes it clear that Naga Padoha is the lord of the Underworld: "Before digging in the earth, you must ask its permission, saying: *Dang na manyegai hami di tano junjungan mori*, that is, 'It is not our intention to destroy your sacred land'.²¹

So much for my brief explanations concerning the *malim* religion, which to a great extent transformed the personalities of the gods of the old Toba religion and their attributions. Its practitioners (who number only 5,700 according to Raja Marnangkok himself) obtained from the authorities, not recognition for their religion, but permission to leave blank on their identity cards the box reserved for the "authorized" religions.

The *parmalim* are not the only ones who organized themselves into a church, with the ultimate aim of fighting the takeover of North Sumatra by Holland. In the Upper Barus, the Kalasan and the Toba seem rather to be followers of the beliefs, or so-called sects, of *agama Si Raja Batak* and *agama Si Singamangaraja*, which also venerate Si Singamangaraja. Gultom says of these faiths that the circumstances of the birth of their hero "resemble a great deal those of the Redeemer of the Christians", but offers no further explanations.²² According to some Toba informants, Si Singamangaraja, or the first of his line, owed his magical gifts to the fact that his mother had had sexual relations with a *homang*, a "forest spirit". That popular version is of course violently denied by the followers of the *malim* religion.

That god of the *parmalim* is Mula Jadi na Bolon for the *induk punguan* Raja Marnangkok Naipospos, but he may very well be Debata Asiasi for certain *parmalim*, such as those whose prayers I once recorded in a *malim* village in 1980, in the company of Guru Ferdinand Halasan Silalahi. This was simply a chance observation and therefore cannot serve as the basis for argument. I may have been misled by a special prayer addressed to a deity of the old *perbegu* pantheon, Debata Asiasi,²³ for a case not lying within the jurisdiction of Mula Jadi.

The prayers of the *parmalim* are addressed to some of the old gods of the *ugamo perbegu* pantheon (Mula Jadi na Bolon, Sideak Parujar, Batara Guru, Naga Padoha ni aji,²⁴ boru Saniang Naga). They also appropriately revere Si Singamangaraja XII under his later name, Raja Nasiakbagi, as the son or prophet of the supreme god, Mula Jadi na Bolon. Certain rites were introduced by the founder, Raja Mulia Naipospos. The founder's son, Raja Ungkap Naipospos, succeeded him, followed by his grandson Raja Marnangkok Naipospos, the current *induk punguan*, who appoints the priests, *ulu punguan*, covering almost all of Toba country, in the Lake Toba area.

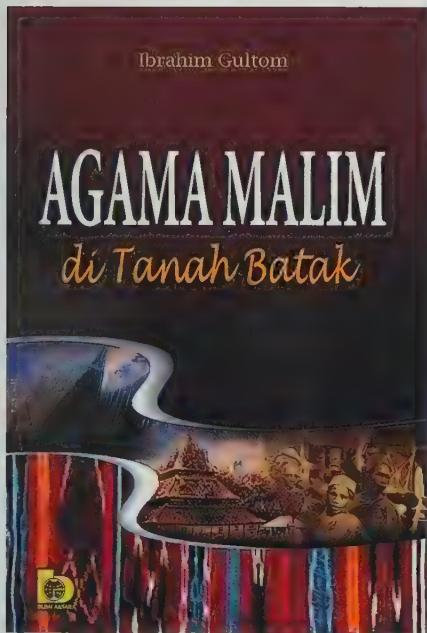


Fig. 87 Cover of Professor Gultom's recent book on the *malim* religion.

Notes

1. There is no question that the Simalungun and Pakpak had a traditional religion fairly similar to that of the Toba, based on a similar myth. According to them, the Karo practised only the cult of ancestors on an altar placed in nature. They did not possess the pantheon of the Toba. In a forthcoming book, I will show that this is inaccurate.
2. For the survival of the *ugamo perbegu*, see below, the section devoted to the *ugamo malim*, a syncretic religion that arose in the late nineteenth century.
3. Warneck 1909, p. 46 ff.
4. Eliade, 1978 (3rd edition).
5. My translation is very free. *Adat* is customary law, divine in nature, and *uhum* is the law stipulating how to punish or remedy violations of the *adat*. They are often confused. On this subject, see the lawyer Jacob Cornelis Vergouwen, whose exposition is very clear in his 1964 *The Social Organization and Customary Law of the Toba-Batak of Northern Sumatra*, p. 130 ff.

6. That village can be found on the quite detailed map of Uluan that I published in *Tobaland* (1983), p. 7. In the same work, p. 6, is a map of the Samosir Peninsula, with the names of the major coastal villages, including those near Muara, in the gulf of the same name, where the island (*pulo*) of Sibandang is situated.

7. Parkin 1978, p. 40.

8. Meerwaldt 1901, p. 50.

9. Personal communication of 15 March 2011, to Anthony Pardede.

10. Gröpper 1985, p. 99.

11. Helbig 1932–33, pp. 231–41.

12. Boer 1915, p. 184.

13. Gröpper 1985, p. 100.

14. Helbig 1932–33, p. 97.

15. That is, "he who suffers", according to the e-mail communication of 16 March 2011, from Professor Ibrahim Gultom. Warneck's *Toba-Batak–Deutsches Wörterbuch* (1977) has "marsiak bagi, arm sein [to be poor]", p. 226.

16. Gröpper 1985, p. 100.

17. See Gultom 2010.

18. The word *naga* also means "majestic", but it is a corruption of the Toba *mago* (that which has majesty). *Naga* is the Sanskrit word for "serpent". It was adopted as is, but designates only dragons or legendary beings. As for Padoha, it is a proper noun with no further meaning. For *maga*, see Warneck 1977, p. 152.

19. Gultom 2010, p. 123.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. E-mail of 16 March 2011.

23. Apart from a nineteenth-century source that makes Debata Asiasi the judge arbitrating the constant quarrels among Mula Jadi na Bolon's three sons, we have little information about the duties of that deity, who seems all the more important to us given that, early on, when Burton and Ward returned from their visit to the Silindung Valley, they described him as the supreme deity of the Toba.

24. The qualifier *ni aji* is found in books of magic (*pustaha*) after the names of very competent *datu* or *guru*; it therefore translates literally as "of magic", which is to say, "master of magic".

Transfer of bones in Huta Julu, cleaning and rubbing with betel juice. Toba region. Photo Doris Gröpfer, 1981.



Chapter VI The social and political organization of the Toba



THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE TOBA

General remarks

All the Batak groups are divided into clans: *marga* among the Toba and the Pakpak Kalasan, and *mego* or *m'rga* (*mërga*), depending on the place, among all the other Pakpak and the Karo. Let me note from the start that only the Toba and the Pakpak Kalasan, each of whose five clans had a Toba exile as its founder, acknowledge that they descend from Si Raja Batak. The Karo, for example, baldly reject that myth, saying it does not belong to their people. Were they to acknowledge it, that would give rise to the

notion that they are subordinate to the Toba, who are more numerous, more brilliant, and of whom—from what I could see—they are extremely jealous.

Among the Toba, the clans descend from the sons of Si Raja Batak, either Guru Tateabulan or Raja Isumbaon, the forebears of the two moieties into which the Toba *marga* are divided: the Sumba moiety and the Lontung moiety.¹ Each clan, that is exogamus, is further divided into a certain number of lineages (*saompu* for the Toba). When they were numerous enough, and when a famous ancestor had become a *sombaon* (to my knowledge, this was true only for the Toba), they were able to hold a great celebration (*santi rea*) and to declare themselves

Fig. 88 Painted decoration on the side of a traditional Toba house in the Uluan region. The symbolic meaning of this ornamentation has been lost. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



an independent *marga*, allowing the members of the new clan to marry a person from the clan which they left. Colonization put an end to that phenomenon.

The social classes

Early authors erroneously divided the Toba Batak into three social classes (even the great H. R. van Heekeren fell into that trap): the nobles (the family of the village rajas); the non-noble residents of the village, for example, the members of the *marga boru* (descendants of men who had married girls from the *marga raja*). It was less common for a member of a *marga hulahula* who had given a girl to the *marga raja* to come reside in his son-in-law's village; and the slaves (*hatoban*). The raja, leader of the village—an autonomous entity—is a powerful, respected figure, especially if he is also a magician, or *datu*, which was common in the *pidari* era. But he is not an absolute ruler. His *marga* is the sole owner of the lands belonging to the village, unlike the four rajas ruling in Simalungun who personally own their territory.

If he welcomed the husband of a girl who belonged to the *marga raja* or to a *marga boru* that had established a lineage in his village, the raja not only allowed him to live there but also granted him a patch of land (*pauseang*) to feed his family.

The members of the *marga boru*, though they owe respect and assistance to the *marga raja* (their *marga hulahula*) when the need arises, are also descended from Si Raja Batak. Fortune has not smiled on them, as it did on the founder of

the village, the forefather of the *marga raja*, which is aristocratic by that very fact. But there is not, between a well-off member of the *marga raja* and a modest member of one of the *marga boru* living in the same village, the distance that existed in Europe between an aristocrat and a peasant. That leads us to conclude that there are actually two social classes represented in a village: the members of the *marga raja* and those of the other *marga* installed in the same village. In the past, that situation was liable to change at any moment, since an adventurous young member of a *marga boru*, gathering around him some of his friends, obliged to leave a village that could not grow any larger, would guide his companions, sometimes a long way, until he found a valley free of trees, or a clearing to develop and grow rice—either on dry fields (*hauma tur*) using the slash-and-burn method or on irrigated terraces (*hauma sabu*). There he would also plant taro and have access to game or fish in sufficient quantities.

The young man would become the raja of the new village, and his wife and children would form the *marga raja*. His daughters would find husbands, forming new *marga boru*, thus enlarging the community. If the number of neighbouring villages was adequate, all their residents would come to help build beautiful traditional houses for the newcomers, and a *datu panggorga* would decorate them with a foliated decoration reminiscent of the cosmic tree (*harihara*) (fig. 43).² When the location chosen was too far away from the other villages, the young raja would have to be satisfied with very simple houses, which he would build with his companions. That was the case in Kalasan villages (fig. 89). It is possible to say, based on a



Fig. 89 Kalasan villages (in this case, Huta Amborgang) have preserved the modest houses built by their ancestors, who arrived in numbers too small to reproduce the large *ruma adat* of the Toba "native land". But, since you cannot fight progress, they are equipped with satellite dishes that allow their occupants to receive television broadcasts. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Heider Da Silva, 2011.

study of the genealogies, that all of them were established by two young Toba who had to leave their own region, in about the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. On the plain extending south of Deleng Sempong Mountain, they did not find a sufficient labour force to build traditional houses with high saddle roofs.

It is now possible to understand how simple and, may I say, democratic the stratifications of Toba society are. Every Toba *marga* is a *marga raja* in one or several villages. In many books, however, Toba *rajas* are described as tyrants, absolute rulers in their village, which (and this is accurate) is a territorial unit subject to no other authority than that of its *raja*, except that obtained by superiority in number and weapons in cases of conflict (I use the present tense, though I am evoking a period that covered several centuries,

up to the time of Dutch colonization).³ The truth still lies in these words, spoken by an old man: "All the Toba are *rajas*, since they are descended from Si Raja Batak."

As for the slaves (*hatoban*), contrary to the information on which van Heekeren relied, they in no way formed a caste. Any Toba, even a member of a powerful *marga raja*, was liable to become a slave to his creditor if he could not pay him back (the most common cause was gambling debt) or to an enemy warrior who had captured him during wartime—if, that is, he was lucky enough to avoid being tied to a stake. Otherwise, every villager would come up to him and extract a small piece of flesh from his body, dipping it in lemon and swallowing it down like an oyster, until there was nothing left of him but a wound, and he died from loss of blood.

The slave performed the tasks entrusted to him: they were reasonable. He was not mistreated. By saving money a little at a time, he was able to buy his freedom. If a woman agreed to marry him, he would still be enslaved, but his wife and children would not. It is clear, therefore, that this is a long way from a caste or even a special social class. Early on, Burton and Ward noticed in the Silindung Valley, where judicial cannibalism was frequently practised against thieves, murderers and certain enemies captured in wartime (except in conflicts between two neighbouring villages), that the slaves were treated very decently. They write: "The laws provide for the protection of persons in this state [slavery], and their allotment of labour is not more oppressive, nor are their comforts fewer, than those of the free members of the families of which they form a part."⁴

The rules of marriage, exogamy, the *dalihan na tolu*

The *adat* prescribes that a Toba cannot form a marriage alliance with a member of his or her own *marga*. That is true incest, punished by the death penalty. It is not a rule intended to prevent consanguineous marriages that might lead to a degeneration of the lineage. On the contrary, the ideal wife of a young Toba man used to be the daughter of his maternal uncle, his first cousin. In the reports of certain ethnologists such as Stöhr, that preference is sometimes presented as an obligation: Clan A gives its daughters to clan B, which gives its daughters to clan C, which provides its own to clan A. Sad to say, that perfect situation is rarely observed, as the genealogies attest. If a *marga* were to choose wives for its young men from

only one clan, it would have only a single *marga hulahula*. And if it gave its daughters to only one other clan, it would have only one *marga boru*.

The Toba use a vivid metaphor to evoke the need to found society on three clans. They compare these three *marga* to the three large, round stones placed on the hearth you discover on entering a house through a trap door in the floor. That door opens onto a small staircase, which necessarily rises to the height of the piers supporting the building along its entire compass, connected by boards that prevent the water buffalo confined there from escaping. The hearth (when there is only one) is placed to the left of the space between the trap door and the left wall of the house. There may be another, if several households occupy the dwelling. A cooking pot sits permanently on the three stones. That setup is called *dalihan na tolu*.⁵ Take away one of the three hearthstones, and the cooking pot will topple over. Similarly, proceed to a marriage between two *marga*, not three, and the cosmic order will feel the effects, society as a whole will be turned upside down.

Among the Toba, the *marga* of an individual (noble or not) who gives his daughter to a young man from another *marga* becomes the *marga hulahula* of the groom's *marga* (the same system exists among the Pakpak and the Karo, but under different names). The clan of an individual whose son receives a daughter from another *marga* becomes its *marga boru*. The individual himself considers his own *marga* the *marga dongan sabutuha*, the one whose genealogy (*tarombo*) he retraces, since descent is patrilineal. That relation is not limited to the husband and his lineage (*saompu*) but extends

to all members of the three *marga*, provided they live in the same region. All the inhabitants of that territory formerly constituted a *blius*, a community not linked by kinship but by proximity. The *marga*, members of the *blius*, once gathered regularly for a celebration both political and religious in nature. That time of feasting was abolished by the Dutch colonial authority, on the pretext that sacrificing buffalo was cruel and impoverished the country.

Funerary feasts: Gatherings of related *marga*

During the feasts, from the least significant to the most important, it is indispensable to know one's genealogy by heart, by learning the name of the *marga* of the wife of each of one's ancestors, and the name of the *marga* of each of the boys who married an ancestor's sister. Take the example of a ceremony for exhuming the bones of ancestors of the Huta Julu *marga*, which took place in the eponymous village in Uluan, near the south-eastern shore of Lake Toba in 1981 (fig. 90).

Fig. 90 In Huta Julu, the bones of the dead, buried decades or even more than a century ago, are exhumed, carefully washed, and often coated with ochre. Only the skulls and long bones will be placed in a large tomb (sarcophagus or urn), formerly made of stone, now of cement. Photo Doris Gröpper, 1981.



The ethno-musicologist Artur Simon attended the ceremony in the company of filmmakers from the Institut für Wissenschaftlichen Film in Göttingen.⁶ Seventy-one skeletons were unearthed at the time, the skulls and long bones were washed, and everything was placed in a *tugu*.⁷

Simon recounts that the *marga boru* were called upon to make preparations for the festivities taking place in conformance with the *adat*: to open the graves and to provide food and drink for the large assembly. The ancestor being honoured was the great-great-great-grandfather of the man organizing the transfer of bones, who functioned as the organizer (*suhut*). Since that ancestor had had two wives, there were two *marga hulahula* from the first, with all their members. Each of the wives of the ancestor's male descendants, all the way down to the *suhut*, brought with her a *marga hulahula*, and, when combined with an equal number of *marga boru*, that made for an enormous crowd. A few ancestors had not been buried near the village but rather in Pematang Siantar (in Simalungun), and people went to fetch their bones. Written invitations had been sent out to all the related *marga*, accompanied by a mechanically reproduced programme of events.

It is quite obvious that the relationships between the *marga hulahula* and the *marga boru* of a member of a lineage of the Siregar *marga* living near Porsea on Lake Toba remained unknown to the Siregar who belonged to a different immigrant lineage, in another *bias*, a long time ago. Each lineage has its own genealogy.

The *marga boru* is in an inferior situation vis-à-vis its *marga hulahula*, owing it aid and assistance,

for example, to rebuild a house after a conflict in wartime or to dig up the dead and to feed the mob of guests during a funerary feast. But the superiority of the *marga hulahula* has its limits, when, for example, its *marga boru* is prestigious and has several rajas from villages located within a single *bias*.⁸

It is important to note, finally, that Toba expansion can be attributed to the search for arable lands in a landscape where the valleys are narrow and the mountains enormous. That explains why they settled within the entire space between Lake Toba and the Indian Ocean, including the regions known as the Upper Barus and the Lower Barus, in the hinterland of that ancient kingdom, which was mentioned by Ptolemy in the second century AD. Toba country extends on to Asahan and Tapanuli Selatan, where the Angkola, who have been Islamized for several centuries, all bear the names of Toba *marga*.

The rajas

It is clear that the raja ("king" in Sanskrit), chieftain of a Toba village, possesses absolute authority over that village and the farmlands adjacent to it as long as the *sahala* of his *tondi* has the *harajaon*, the natural gift of commanding. Each village is a small kingdom. Sometimes villages go to war with one another, and sometimes they form alliances, which require that one of the chieftains take supreme command of the coalition. It is the most qualified, the most courageous, and the most intelligent who is designated: neither rank nor seniority nor the great reputation of the individual's *marga* comes into play. Only his *sahala* is taken into account.

Fig. 91 On this page from a *pustaha*, the figures in a bark are not gods, illustrious ancestors, or spirits. They simply illustrate a magic recipe, which consists of making a small boat of tree bark and filling it with crudely carved statuettes that bear an evil magical charge. The boat was then placed on the river, which took it downstream to the enemy village. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

Because of the constant conflicts, which justified the building of fortifications around the villages to prevent assaults, a “market peace” was instituted once a month, so that farmers from all the villages could go to the township where a market (*onan*) was held and could sell their products there, without having to fear being attacked on the way. Wisdom and the instinct for survival were stronger than the spirit of revenge.

Vested with *harajaon* (the *sahala* possessed by his *tondi*, which made him a good leader), the raja enriched himself and made his subjects prosperous. If a conflict erupted with a neighbouring village, he was naturally the strategist and the valiant warrior who achieved victory for fear of being demeaned.

In principle, a deceased chieftain was succeeded by his eldest son. But it sometimes happened that that son renounced his right of primogeniture, on his own or under pressure from the residents of the village, in favour of a brother more highly regarded than he, considered to possess a *tondi* with a greater *sahala*.

The *datu*, his master the *guru*, and his activities

Certain works published recently on “the Batak” (in reality, only the Toba and Karo are discussed) might lead one to believe that the terms “*guru*”, used by the Karo, and *datu*, used by the Toba, are synonymous for the Toba. That is not correct. The word “*guru*” is obviously borrowed from Sanskrit, and for once, its meaning has not changed very much. By contrast, the word *datu* belongs to the



vocabulary of many Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) peoples and designates someone powerful. In Sumba, one of the Lesser Sunda Islands, a magician is a *ratu*. In Palawan, in the southern Philippines, the *datu* is the equivalent of the Toba raja: the village chieftain. Variants of the word are found as far away as Polynesia.

Johannes Winkler⁹ attributed three tasks to the *datu*: the art of protecting life; the art of destroying life; and the art of predicting the future. It is absolutely correct that these three activities are those that occupy most of the *datu*'s life, since, as Winkler implies, they include the art of curing illnesses, of calming troubled souls. But Winkler passes over in silence an activity that made it possible for us to admire the creativity of the Batak people in our museums: the art of carving, out of wood or stone, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figures, magico-religious, funerary and prestigious. In such cases, the magician is a *datu panggana* (from *ganaganaan*,

statuette or figure) or a *datu parsinga* (from *singa*, effigy or drawing, a term unrelated to the word for the famous buffalo-serpent, Naga Padoha's attribute animal, which is derived from the Sanskrit, where it signifies "lion").

The magician may also be a specialist in the bas-relief decorations (*gorga*) heightened with paint that appear on traditional houses. In that activity, he is called *datu panggora*, and as such is also the one who compiles recipe books (called *pustaha*) of magic potions, adorning them with drawings (fig. 91) altogether similar to those found on the sides of traditional Toba houses (fig. 92).

The *datu*'s knowledge consists primarily of the following non-exhaustive list:

- identifying the instigator or cause of a danger, an illness, an epidemic, whether it is threatening the villagers or the buffalo or even the pigs;
- fending off the attacks of enemy magicians by means of protective fetishes (*pagar*);
- causing the ruin of an enemy village or the death of an enemy by means of an aggressive fetish (*pangulubalang*),¹⁰ sometimes at the cost of a human sacrifice;
- healing the sick, who are often the victims of their souls (*tondi*), which have left them and must rejoin the bodies to which they are normally attached;
- finding the recipe in his magic book (*pustaha*) that will allow him to prepare certain decoctions of grasses, animal blood and other products, often including eggs;
- and finally and above all, practising the science of oracles, since the *datu* can have no better qualifications than as a "magician and diviner". There are a hundred ways to predict the future. To give two examples: you can confine a hen

under a wicker basket (*manuk di ampang*) on sandy soil; once the basket has been removed and the hen has gone away, the *datu di manuk* (hen diviner) will read the scratchings left on the ground or the disorder of the objects placed under the cage, in the same way that a European fortune teller reads coffee grounds. You can also disembowel the same hen and find the answer to the question in its palpitating entrails.

Fig. 92 On the side of a Toba house in Uluan, the *datu panggora* has painted a floral frame (an allusion to the cosmic tree). The principal motif is a hen, the one that gave birth to the three sons of Mula Jadi na Bolon, the supreme god (?). Above the animal is a bark with a human being on board, flanked by two supernatural beings. Since there are no Toba myths that mention a "bark of the dead", as there are among the Dayak, it is not possible to deliver an interpretation. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1980.



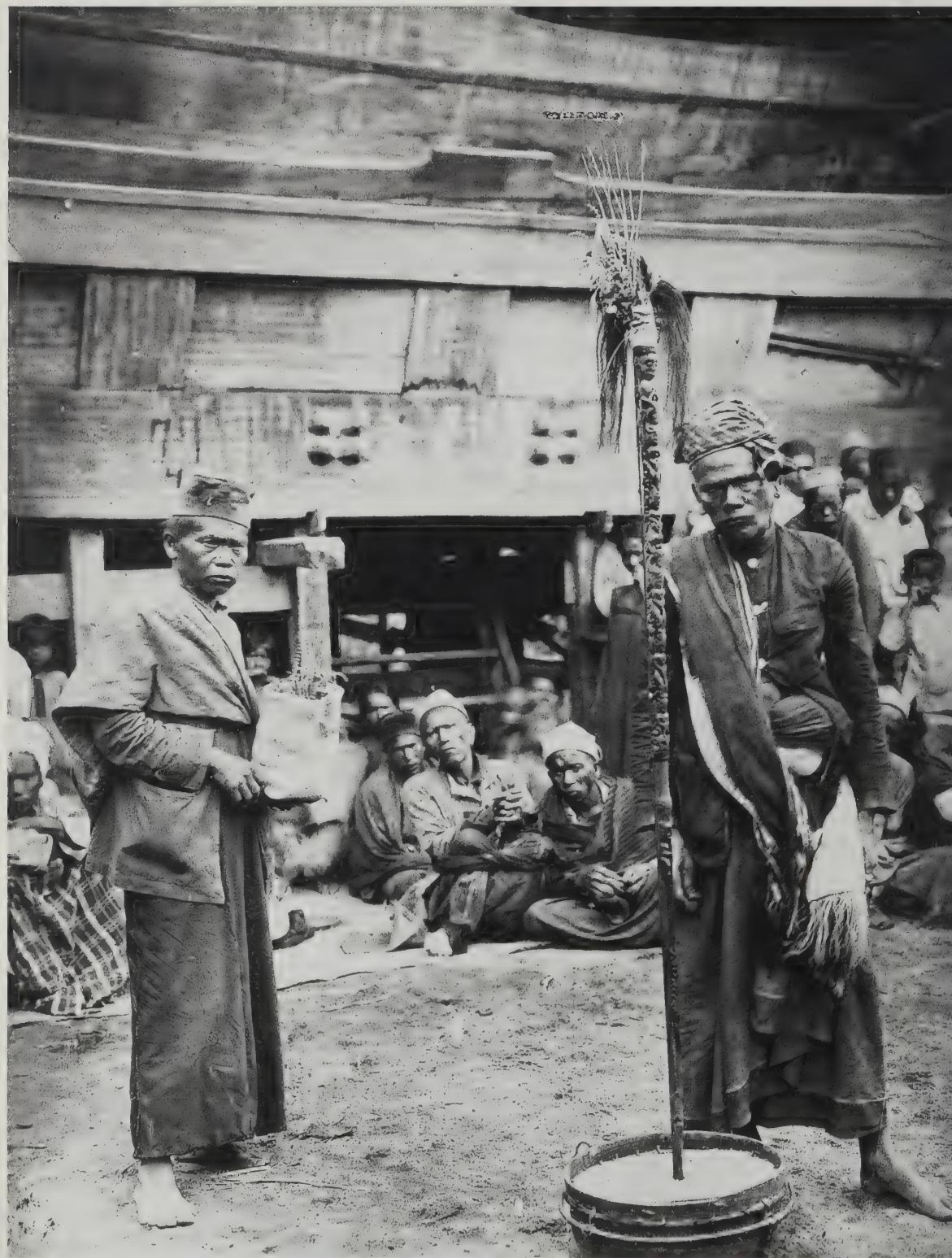


Fig. 93 Toba diviner-magician (*datu*) planting the magic wand (*tunggal panaluan*) in a rice basket.
At left, his assistant. Photo Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam.



Fig. 94 Raja Isaac Lumban Gaol with the *datu* Ama Batuholing Lumban Gaol (right). Photo Johannes Winkler, about 1920. From Winkler 1925.

Similarly, the *suhut*, organizer of the major feasts that assembled the descendants of the founding ancestor of a *saompu* (lineage) or *marga* (clan), and who recalled in a long litany the names of all the *marga hulahula* and all the *marga boru* of his own lineage or clan (*dongan sabutuha*), belonged to the *marga raja*. He could be a *datu*, but he was not obliged to be. The *suhut* performed the function of sacrificer of the offerings of blood and animal flesh made to the gods.

It goes without saying that the *datu* (fig. 93) had to know the mythology of his people perfectly; he had to know to which god he should address a prayer and how to beseech Mula Jadi as a last resort. The “spirit world”, which contains not only wicked supernatural beings but also the souls of the “great ancestors” (*sombaon*), who are close to gods, had to be familiar to him, since his role was to enter into contact with them through the intermediary of the *sibaso*, a woman who could go into a trance.

Translating *datu* as “priest” is an oft-committed error. It is the rajas who make offerings to the gods and to the great ancestors. They are qualified to do so by virtue of their divine origin, Si Raja Batak being the descendant of Sideak Parujar and Si Raja Uhum Manisia. And the capacity to rule (*harajaon*) is conferred on the raja’s *tondi*, his soul, because of the *sahala* attributed to him by Mula Jadi na Bolon. The raja’s house used to be sacred. In it were deposited the magical objects essential for the community’s survival, such as the magic wand, *tunggal panaluan*.¹¹ His special power made members of the *marga raja* (his family) a class apart in the village: not just a class of “aristocrats” but people surrounded in a slight celestial aura. The raja and the *datu*, in short, complemented each other (fig. 94).

It is necessary to understand that in the life of the Batak of earlier times (and here I am not speaking only of the Toba and Kalasan), no event was “natural”. Surrounded by supernatural entities, beginning with their own souls (*tondi*, or *tendi* among the Karo), which were capable of behaving independently and of causing a thousand problems, these peoples found themselves in the position of a shepherd whose flock is too big for him to watch over every sheep. Overwhelmed by the constant snares to which they fell victim, whether minor or grave, people rushed to the *datu* at the slightest alarm. He then went to work, in exchange for honoraria that the missionaries declared to be exorbitant.



Fig. 95 In front of the great house Pa'm Belgah in Kabanjahe, among the Karo Batak, among the Karo Batak, a guru is engaged in a ritual before a makeshift altar, using the large magic wand (*tungkat penaluen*). Photo Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam.

One German minister said that the *datu* were "appalling profiteers".

No one became a *datu* on an impulse, unlike the situation with the *sibaso* (medium), who might suddenly discover she or he could go into a trance and communicate with the "spirits". The young member of a *marga raja* who wished to learn the magician's trade had to seek out an experienced, renowned *datu*, if possible one who practised several specialties (among those listed above); and he had to be taken in as a student. That education lasted about two years. Among the Toba,¹² a *datu* who accepted students was called a "guru", a fundamental distinction. His remuneration too was considerable. As for

the student, his *tondi* was supposed to possess a *sahala* powerful enough to confer on the apprentice magician the *hadatuhon* that would lead the whole community to recognize him as the one to turn to in times of distress or illness, or in the event of malevolent acts by a magician from outside the community.

Only boys born to rich families, in the *marga raja* of a well-to-do village, could undertake such an apprenticeship. It was not unusual for the renown of a *datu* to extend beyond the borders of the territory occupied by his group. The Pakpak and the Simalungun were reputed to produce excellent teachers of magic. Apart from their knowledge in matters of magic and divination,

some *datu* mastered the art of carving amulets and anthropomorphic fetishes or of casting brass (*suasa*),¹³ producing sabre handles, prestigious tobacco pipes more than a metre long, small *singa* heads, and chains with brass links for leather sacks used by the magicians themselves. They used the lost-wax casting method. The fashioner of a bracelet or ring first executed the object in wax. He coated it with a fine layer of clay, then placed it inside a large block of clay, taking the precaution of introducing iron rods to connect the wax to the outside. The clay, having been placed in a glowing fire, became a block of terra cotta. When the iron rods were pulled out, the wax drained away, leaving inside the terra cotta the hollow shape of the model. Now the *datu* had only to pour the molten brass through the same holes to fill the void. It was left to cool. When the terra cotta block was broken, he had (with luck!) the brass or, less often, silver bracelet or ring (figs 96a–b). All that was left was to remove the tapping rods and burnish the object.

The many tasks of the Toba magician-diviner-healer have been the object of so many descriptions in the literature that I shall add nothing here. Recall simply that they wrote for their students, on tree bark folded into an accordion, books of magic recipes illustrated with drawings resembling those that decorate the houses. These books are called *pustaha* (fig. 91).

It was not possible to gather any information about the magicians of the Kalasan, to whom this study is devoted, except that they existed before being banned by the Christian missionaries. Some Toba are extremely proud of the feats of their *datu*, sometimes claiming that their performances became impossible



Figs 96a and b These two Toba bracelets were made by the lost-wax process. The one at top, in silver, displays the head of a *singa*, a serpent, whose coiled body forms the bracelet. The one at bottom, made of brass, bears the image of a lizard, an attribute animal of the fertility god Boraspati ni Tano. Diam. 8 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photos Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

Fig. 97 Large three-holed triangular mortar made of stone, near the abandoned village of Huta Pagar Batu, a few minutes on foot from Lontung (eastern Samosir). Raja Tarhuak Situmorang supposedly sculpted it somewhere else and "projected" it to this location. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1978.



Fig. 98 Village of Lumban Pangaloan, on the western shore, opposite Samosir Island. The two-holed mortar, 320 cm long, is the largest known. In the background, a stone sarcophagus carved by Datu Parsinga Ulanda Maroit, who also produced the large mortar in about 1830–50, for Ompu ni Atas Laut Simarmata. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.



because of the evil influence of the Dutch who conquered them—these Dutch being in possession of magical methods that neutralized those of the Toba.¹⁴ The Kalasan, by contrast, are tight-lipped when someone brings up the subject. Anthony Pardede spent long days in Kalasan villages without obtaining the slightest significant response.

Yes, their magicians possessed and produced magical products. Yes, they had heard of the *si biaksa* (*si biangsa*) and, less often, of the *pupuk*, prepared with certain parts of a child sacrificed for that express purpose. Yes, some of their ancestors were able to levitate large stone mortars (figs 97–98) and project them from a distance without touching them. Yes, their *datu panggana* carved different objects, in particular the "horsemen", the stone *mejan*.

I have a very keen sense that it would be necessary to take up residence in Parlilitan, to stay there for six months or a year, in order to establish close enough relations with the Kalasan (who are in fact very gracious and cooperative) and wrest from them what secrets remain from the *pidari* era—if any do in 2011.

In 1990 that was probably still possible. Rumang Hasogihon, born in 1900, had a very clear memory and was friendly by nature (fig. 99). Anthony told me that, five years later (in 1995, therefore), he was still alive and alert. I believe he would have made a remarkable interlocutor, taking into account the distance maintained between the Kalasan and the German missionaries and Dutch officials. That distance is clear enough in the census of the *marga* done by Hoetagaloeng, himself an employee in the service of the Netherlands, who knew nothing

about the Kalasan. But I confess that my other activities prevented me, when I was healthy, from remaining two or three months in a large village like Parlilitan and from chatting with good informants without bombarding them with questions.

Apparently, the Kalasan, besides erecting monumental stone statues to their dead, have continued to follow Toba customs. I therefore need only persist in describing these, before I move into Kalasan country to speak of their social organization, to recount the history of their clans, and to say how, having been Toba, they became Pakpak.

The datu panggana (sculptors) and the Toba styles

A young Toba could do his apprenticeship as a magician-sculptor among the Simalungun or the Pakpak of Dairi,¹⁵ which explains why it is sometimes so difficult to define the origin of an object based on the *datu's* specific style. It does seem, however, that the majority of the Toba *datu panggana*¹⁶ and *datu panggora* studied only with Toba gurus. In fact, neither the traditional houses, nor the stone monuments (sarcophagi, "equestrian" statues, statues of the wives of rajas in the region of the Upper Barus), nor the wood statuettes representing *pagar* (protective "fetishes"), show any stylistic bastardization. Conversely, in the case of small brass objects, though some belong to the pure Toba style (fig. 104), the place of manufacture of other pieces is very difficult to identify (fig. 102).



Fig. 99 Rumang Hasogihon in Huta Amborgang, a member of the Kalasan *marga* founded by Raja Tunggul (son of Raja Si Godang ulu Sihotang) nearly fifty years ago. Rumang was ninety years old when this shot was taken. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1990.



The *tunggal panaluan* (those that are authentic, that is, since the manufacture of magic wands for tourists began during World War I) raise a very delicate question. No one has ever clarified why there are two styles, both indisputably Toba but very different from each other. The first style adopts a representation similar to that of the human figure appearing on the knife handle in figure 104: his face is divided by a prominent vertical line running from the top of his forehead to his chin (fig. 100). The second (fig. 101) depicts men with helmet-shaped headdresses and women with bulging eyes and toothy mouths, looking a bit archaic when compared to works in the first style. I once believed, based on a certain resemblance between the faces of the first style and the *topeng* masks of Java,¹⁷ that there was a Javanese influence. That now seems impossible to me, for historical reasons. Thirty years have gone by: I have had time to reflect and have abandoned that hypothesis founded on a stylistic resemblance.

Figs 100 and 101 Two Toba magic wands (*tunggal panaluan*) representing two different styles. The one on the left was certainly made in the "native land" (between Lake Toba and the Silindung Valley). No one knows whether the style of the one on the right corresponds to a function or a particular regional provenance. H. 189 and 123 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris.
abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photos Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

Fig. 102 Top of a magic wand (*tungkot malehat*), probably Toba. The figure was produced in copper by the lost-wax process. The shape of the ear is in the Toba style, but the figure as a whole has an unusual appearance, as does the mount, a *singa* on a base, both made of wood. One hesitates to attribute it to the Toba. Former Philippe Guimiot Collection, now in a private collection.
abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

Fig. 102



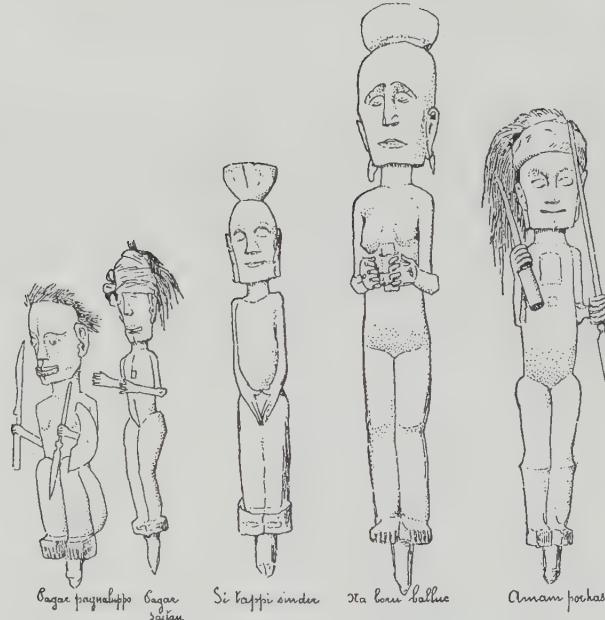


Fig. 103 Some of the Toba *pagar* collected by Modigliani in about 1890 in the Silindung Valley, on the way to Balige. The *pagar* on the left is very representative of the "canonical" Toba style, with its face divided in two by a median ridge. Drawing in Modigliani, *Fra i Batacchi indipendenti*, 1892.



Fig. 104 Handle of brass knife in the "canonical" Toba style of the "native land". Total H. 21 cm. Private collection. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.



The first Toba style is attested by old photos depicting wood statuettes collected by Modigliani between Tarutung (fig. 103) and Balige,¹⁸ and by one of Volz's drawings (fig. 107), which shows a fetish for curing the wife of a village chieftain that had used the remains of a girl from the Saragi *marga*,¹⁹ sacrificed by a *datu* for that express purpose. That evidence modifies our conception of the *pangulubang*, which is generally considered to belong to offensive "black magic". In reality, the magical preparation, *si biaksa*, with a *pupuk* (organic human matter)

Figs 107 and 108 The statuette at left was collected from the Toba by Volz. Although made of wood, it is a *pangulubang*, a fetish that received a magical charge, containing the remains of a young girl, kidnapped and then sacrificed to cure the wife of the village chieftain. The victim's hair tops the statuette. Drawing by Volz, 1909. The one on the right is a statue of the fertility spirit *boru Saragi* (or *boru na Mora*). Both statuettes are perfect examples of the Toba style of the "native land". Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden.



Fig. 105 Top of Karo magic wand (*tungkat malekat*), without the wand. The angularity of the sculpture, its facets, and the *singa* head with large eyes are characteristic of the Karo style.
H. of statuette: 22 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

base, possesses a potency that allows it to intervene in the most desperate situations, to vanquish the most cunning "nature spirits", and to counter offensive magical practices, as well as to trigger epidemics or other catastrophes against a person or a community and to return the soul, *tondi*, that has escaped or been stolen by a sorcerer to the body of a gravely ill person. The sculpture collected and drawn by Volz greatly resembles an ample-breasted female statuette wearing a sarong made of woven fibre that is now in the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden. Both works are examples of the canonical Toba style (fig. 108).

The Karo style is easily identifiable by its angularity, the facets of the faces of its human figures (fig. 105). The Pakpak style of Dairi, which is little known, is similar to it, as attested

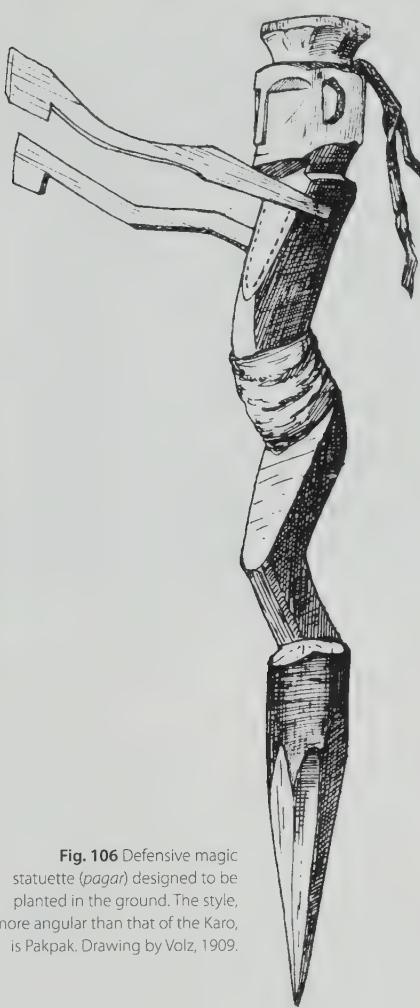


Fig. 106 Defensive magic statuette (*pagar*) designed to be planted in the ground. The style, more angular than that of the Karo, is Pakpak. Drawing by Volz, 1909.

by a sculpture reproduced by Volz (fig. 106). A photo by Voorhoeve (fig. 109) shows a group of small stone *pangulubalang*, whose headdresses greatly resemble the one on the human figure placed at the top of a magic wand (fig. 111), a man whose face is treated in an unusual manner. All the Toba to whom I showed that photo protested that the wand was unfamiliar to them. It was the same story with the Karo (that did not surprise me). Among the Pakpak Kepas, in the area around Sidikalang, several elderly people told me (in the mid-1980s)



Fig. 109 Six stone statuettes (*pangulubalang*) from among the Pakpak Simsim. abm—archives barbier-mueller.
Photo taken by Petrus Voorhoeve before 1939, near Salak.



Fig. 110 Detail of the previous photo showing the largest of the fetishes, with the arch of the eyebrows forming a kind of helmet above the elongated eyes.

that the style was "rather similar" to what their sculptors were doing. I heard the same thing among the Pakpak Pegagan. By contrast, I was met with a very clear rejection of the wand by the Simsim and Kalasan. That was not sufficient for me to attribute a Pakpak Kepas or Pegagan origin to the wand. Remember that a diversity of styles can exist, not only because apprentice magicians spent time outside their native land but also because true artists are inventive. I do not see how such riddles associated with stylistic problems, as in the case of this wand, could be solved.

The Simalungun, like the Toba—who exerted a strong influence on them, except in architecture²⁰—also have several ways of representing a human being. Their production is so diverse that I shall set them aside without hesitation, since they lie outside my purview. I shall end this brief review of the styles

proper to the Toba, Kalasan, Simsim and Karo groups by concluding that it is reckless, even impossible to determine the "provenance" of most of the portable objects and even of the Batak stone statues (except for the Toba and Karo sculptures of "canonical" style). Some may have been made in Balige to be sold to the Pakpak, others carved among the Toba by a *datu* from Simalungun. In addition, recall that an apprenticeship for the *datu*'s craft was done among several gurus in succession, gurus who belonged to groups very remote from that of the apprentice, who therefore returned to his region with an idiom leading him to produce sculptures that were stylistic hybrids. For my part, I am ready to commit myself only when I hold in my hands an indubitably Toba work, like the modest knife in figure 104. As for the works attributed to the Karo, a number of them must no doubt be reassigned to the Northern and Central Pakpak (great magicians). In short,



Fig. 111 Detail of the head of the figure atop a magic wand, or *tunggal panaluhan* (in Toba), of unknown origin. Note the curious motif of the eyebrows that delimit the forehead like a helmet, as on the *pangulubalang* in fig. 110, whose Simsim origin is beyond doubt. Private collection.

abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

it is practically only the façade decorations of the Toba (*singa ni ruma*) and of the Western Karo (*takal singa*) about which we can be sure that they were done by local *datu*.

Only the “good sculptors” are at issue here. In every Toba village, there must have been a *datu* without any training as a sculptor, more or less skilful, who would take on the task of producing, for example, very rough stone statues, the *pangulubalang*, with human forms that were very simplified, because of the sculptor’s lack of experience, but not necessarily without charm (fig. 112).

The *pangulubalang*²¹ are statues, usually of stone but sometimes of wood (fig. 107), into which the most active magical mixtures have been inserted: the *pupuk*, for example, which incorporates bits of organs from human beings put to death under appalling conditions (a

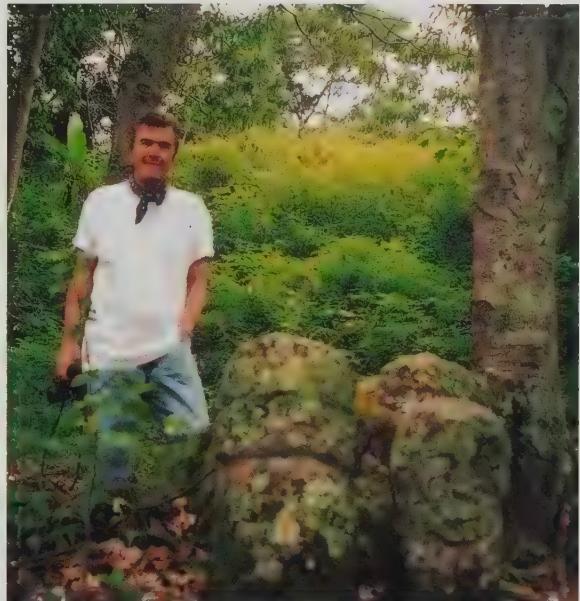


Fig. 112 Two Toba *pangulubalang* in Lumban Harihara (Ambarita) on the Samosir Peninsula. The day of the photo, the author saw a woman bringing them offerings. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Jana Ansermet, 1996.

practice denied by a number of ethnologists wishing to defend the reputation of the Batak, who for their part could not care less, being rather proud of the cunning of their ancestors). They can be found among the Toba south-west of the Kalasan and among the Pakpak Simsim, north-east of them. The Kalasan admit they practised human sacrifice for the sole purpose of obtaining the magical product called *pupuk* (*si biangsa*). It is therefore not an extravagant hypothesis to claim that the Kalasan possessed such fetishes. Perhaps they were not carved in stone as among the Toba and the Simsim. There is no doubt, however, that they existed.

The large Amsterdam manuscript (fig. 113) contains a recipe for preparing the powerful *pupuk*, which entails pouring molten lead into the mouth of a toothless human being, one who “malose” (no one has been able to discover the meaning of this word, which seems to be a

verb).²² Human sacrifice was probably designated by the term *mangomipa*, which means "to pull a bound child onto one's back", the preliminary stage of the sacrifice. No single Toba informant, however, was ever able to confirm it.



Fig. 113 Large and magnificent magic book (*pustaha*), with wooden cover representing Naga Padoha in the form of a *singa*, the cosmic serpent. Inside is the recipe for making *pupuk*, by sacrificing a "human being without teeth". Collected in the Upper or Lower Barus. Brought back by H. Neubronner van der Tuuk, 1851–57. Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam. Collection no. A-1389.



Fig. 114 This extraordinary stone *pangulubalang* was found in Kecupak Dua near Salak (Manik marga) by Anthony Pardeede, during one of his many reconnaissance trips. In Simsim country, the sculpture was known to produce miracles, and sacrifices were regularly offered to it: hens and sometimes a red dog. It disappeared in the early years of the twenty-first century. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardeede, 1983.

Notes

1. For those who do not read Toba, it is easier to consult, rather than Hoetagaloeng, the genealogies provided by Jacob Cornelis Vergouwen at the beginning of his monumental *Social Organization and Customary Law of the Toba-Batak of Northern Sumatra* (1964). It is clear that the Sinambela *marga*, to which the dynasty of the twelve Si Singamangarajas belonged, was part of the Sumba moiety, as a result of which the great "priest king" recruited his followers from among the other *marga* of the Sumba moiety and was not followed by the members of the *marga* belonging to the Lontung moiety, with the exception of some of their *marga hulahula* and *marga boru*. The Sinambela *marga* was not especially prestigious in its village of Bakkara, located south-west of Lake Toba and well-fortified by a stone wall. The first of the dynasty of "priest kings", whom it would be better to call "magician kings", must have possessed such resourcefulness in his feats of magic that the neighbouring villagers were overpowered, and the same abilities were attributed to his descendants. It is that first Singamangaraja who, some legends say, was dubbed by Raja Utí, mythical king of Barus. The sultan of Aceh, very worried about the bellicose impulses of the Dutch, sent his blessing to Si Singamangaraja XII, with a seal (preserved by his family) that established his political authority over these Batak. The sultan of Aceh would have really liked to conquer that people, had they not been so far from his kingdom and separated from it by two other small populations, the Gajo being more dangerous than the Alas.

2. In Toba, *harihara* is the name for the sacred fig (*ficus religiosa*), which the founder of the village would plant before beginning to erect the rectangular enclosing wall (*parik*) from clods of earth, on which thorny bamboo, *bulu suga*, was planted. That wall had an opening (*bahal*) on one of the short sides, defended by a chicane. In regions rich in scree, such as the western shore of Lake Toba, a few villages have stone *parik*. The door is in that case a megalithic construction, an accumulation of large lateral blocks tapering toward the top (such is the case for Lumban Pangaloan). These stone *parik* were also covered with clods of earth and planted with thorny bamboo. Their height was (and still is) greater than that of the *parik* made solely of earth, as, for example, on the Uluan plain.

3. I shall not point out all the outrageous blunders written about the social organization of the Toba. I have briefly mentioned the error that makes the *hatoban* (slaves) a hereditary caste. Another is to consider the *raja ni huta* a replica of Louis XVI, indolent and maladroit. The expulsion of an incompetent "king" occurred without fuss and without a guillotine.

4. Burton and Ward 1827, p. 508.

5. *Tolu* means "three".

6. Simon 1982. The photos taken during that ceremony are probably unique. During the much less important celebration I was able to have filmed by Télévision Suisse Romande, in a lineage of the Gultom *marga* in Samosir, I was never able to see the skull whose exhumation was the occasion for the gathering, or to know where it was deposited. It is true I was not in a familiar region, but in a place still unknown, to which my attention had been drawn by the announcement of a celebration that was to take place the next day. I was not on friendly terms with any of the Gultoms or with anyone in the related *marga*. I published a few photos of that ceremony in *Tobaland* (1983) p. 72 ff.

7. The word *tugu* is borrowed from the Javanese, where it designates a boundary stone. A *tugu*-type tomb is surmounted by a tall quadrangular obelisk of sorts. There is now a tendency to call all modern tombs *tugu*, but their name is *simen* (derived from "cement"). Tombs can take any number of forms, in particular that of miniature traditional houses painted in bright colours, and not just the three traditional "cosmic" colours: black, red and white, which still survive on the few houses built in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century that have remained in good condition.

8. Remark of Raja Pardoling Situmorang (October 1980).

9. Winkler 1925, pp. 72–81.

10. *Ulubalang* means "war chief".

11. Personal communication from Guru Karel Sibuea. Do I need to point out that that informant, born in the early twentieth century and the son of a famous *datu*, was evoking the customs of his own village in the Silindung Valley? Elsewhere, in Uluan, a Toba raja (Pane Sitorus) told me that no *datu* could possess a *tunggal panaluan* unless he was also the raja of his village, information confirmed on Samosir Island by several members of the Situmorang *marga*, in Lontung and Huta Martaban.

12. Among the Karo, magicians were called "gurus", the word *datu* being unknown.

13. A recent work on the Batak speaks of brass "and" bronze. Brass, of course, is an alloy of copper and zinc, bronze an alloy of copper and tin. In the prehistoric period, Indonesia produced a certain number of bronzes, especially in the early centuries AD, when the influence of the Dong Son civilization of Vietnam made itself felt in the entire archipelago and as far away as Melanesia. Since the sixteenth century, it is almost always brass that has been found in Africa, and in Island Southeast Asia, imported by the Dutch and Portuguese. All the metal Batak objects I have been able to see in museums and private collections were made of brass, none of bronze. They were often encrusted with black iron, white zinc or red copper.

14. Pane Sitorus, interviews of 1977.

15. To be precise, these are Pakpak clans living in the present-day regency of Dairi, who are culturally close to the Karo. The Kalasan uncovered by this book live in the Humbang Hasundutan regency.

16. In Toba, the word *ganaganaan* means "sculpture, effigy".

17. See Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller, *Tobaland* (1983) figs 180 and 181.

18. Ibid. fig. 184.

19. Volz 1909, p. 157, fig. 55.

20. The large, noble houses of Simalungun have affinities with those of the Eastern Karo and have nothing in common with traditional Toba houses.

21. To be altogether accurate, the *pangulubalang* (*ulubalang* means "warrior") is not the statue or an object of any kind in which the magical material is placed to confer on it an offensive or defensive power. The statue takes the name given to that material, activated as an offensive and defensive power by the spirit of a human being who, before dying as a sacrifice, has sworn to obey the magician who will take his life. What this means is that the *pangulubalang* is the mixture, in the form of a paste, of different ingredients, including the active principle, *pupuk*, preciously preserved in a tiny Chinese porcelain pot equipped with a carved wooden lid. That substance is introduced in weak doses into the *si biangsas*, as one ingredient in a composition that may include many other additives: animal blood and organs, sacred herbs and so on. I learned this during my first investigations, after long conversations with elderly people born in the nineteenth century, which I undertook because of the sometimes contradictory information given by Warneck. I guarantee the accurate transcription of their information, but I cannot deny that it may have applied only to their *bius* (territorial community), located mainly on Samosir Island and in the Humbang Hasundutan regency. All of them confirmed the now-famous sacrifice of a child who had sworn to obey the *datu* who coddled him after his capture. That child was put to death by means of molten lead introduced into his throat to seal his promise. Nevertheless, the Amsterdam *pustaha* (Toba book of magic), to take one example, recommends sacrificing a "human being without teeth" (fig. 113). At issue is either an infant or an elderly person, and at that point we have no corroborating evidence, since without exception all our information speaks of the abduction and execution of a child.

22. I published the complete translation of the passage in the *Bulletin du musée Barbier-Mueller* (March 1984).

Little girl from the Nahampun *marga* in Huta Pea Raja. We can see that the Kalasan are far from having beautiful traditional houses. abm-archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Chapter VII The Kalasan





Figs 115, 116 and 117 Three views of flooded rice fields (*hauma saba*) in Kalasan country. The entire plain, of which Parlilitan is the seat, is surrounded by mountains on three sides. Here, deforestation by humans is obvious. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photos Helder Da Silva, 2011.



THE KALASAN

Introduction

It should not be surprising that I have focused so attentively on the Toba, since *all* the clans of the Kalasan were founded by exiled Toba whose names and histories are known. Some Kalasan clans therefore have both a Kalasan name ("Kesugihen", for example) and a Toba name ("Hasogihon", with variants). That name belongs to the founder or is derived from his name, but the Kalasan clans do not in any way acknowledge their connection to the former Toba *marga*, which would make certain shows of respect obligatory. It is simply historical fact.

The Kalasan, then, though they all know their genealogy going back to a founder of a Toba clan, refuse to be assimilated to the Toba, their neighbours on the plain between Parlilitan and Dolok Sanggul. Although separated from the Pakpak Simsime by a high mountain, they chose to establish familial relations with them, because

the Simsime accepted the teachings of Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan in about AD 1600 and, like the Kalasan, adopted the practice of cremating the bones of the dead and of creating "equestrian" effigies for the deceased chieftains, accompanied by urns for their ashes. The wives are represented separately, on "horseback" (see fig. 135), never sitting in front of their husbands on the same mount, which is harnessed like a horse (figs 61–62), as do the Pakpak Simsime of the Bancin clan.

Although it is said that Guru Kalasan recommended carving mounts representing horses or elephants, the Simsime, like the Kalasan, almost always opted for buffalo-*naga*, representations of the *singa*.

The Kalasan's relations with the neighbouring Toba

The most important locality in Kalasan country is Parlilitan, the residence of the *camat* (district leader) of the *kecamatan* of Parlilitan, one of the ten districts in the *kabupaten* of Humbang



Hasundutan, whose *bupati* lives in Dolok Sanggul. Palilitan is well-known in history as the place where the leader of the Batak resistance to Dutch colonial troops, the notorious Si Singamangaraja, was killed. You would think that would have incited a few curiosity-seekers to go there. Such is not at all the case.

Note that Kalasan country does not extend into the *kabupaten* of Samosir (I have not been able to obtain full verification of this, since the region has only a small number of roads suitable for motor vehicles), which occupies not only the entire "island" of Samosir but also part of the landmass beyond Tele, and whose *bupati* resides in Pangururan. According to the chieftains of the villages neighbouring Parlilitan, all of Kalasan country is contained within the limits of the *kabupaten* of Humbang Hasundutan.

I am much better acquainted with the region between Pakkat and Dolok Sanggul, and between Pakkat and Pusuk, than I am with Kalasan country proper, especially its northern part, where I have never been (having assigned that task to

my assistant Anthony Pardede), my research being focused primarily on the Middle and Lower Barus, the region between Sijamapolang and the Indian Ocean, which is very rich in high-quality sculptures and in learned informants.

In the literature, authors such as Hoetagaloeng, W. K. H. Ypes—the only one besides Volz to have provided us with information about the Pakpak¹—and, to a lesser extent, Vergouwen, point out that one *marga* or another expanded into the region of Parlilitan or the Upper Barus, without telling us that it had separated itself from the Toba people, changing funerary rites and declaring henceforth that it is a part of the Pakpak people, who include it in the *lima suak*, the "five regions".²

That attitude is particularly astonishing in that the Kalasan are cut off from the Simsim by a chain of mountains and have little contact with them. They themselves live on a plain (figs 115–17) uneven enough to grow rice on flooded terraces (*hauma saba*). Surrounded on all sides by the Toba, except to the north-east, where another



Fig. 118 Kalasan village of Huta Amborgang. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

mountain chain isolates them from the road leading from Dolok Sanggul to Tele, their villages, made of modest dwellings compared with those of their Toba relatives (fig. 118), are sometimes only 2 or 3 kilometres away, on roads that in 1995 were suitable for motor vehicles, but of which a certain part is now inaccessible or passable only with difficulty, the road from Pakkat to Parlilitan, for example.³

Marriages between Kalasan and Toba are common. There are Kalasan *marga boru* in the Toba villages between Dolok Sanggul and Parlilitan, and between Pakkat and Parlilitan. Similarly, the survey taken by residents of Kalasan villages (those encountered as one approaches Parlilitan and also beyond it) revealed the presence of Toba *marga boru* there. The same is also true for *marga hulahula*.

The origin of the Kalasan clans

Unlike the Toba *marga*, the five Kalasan *marga* did not diverge from a common trunk. Each was founded by a Toba who came to settle in the Upper Barus. Later, about a century after their founder's death, the *marga* adopted the practice of burning the bones of the dead, as recommended by Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan. That united them and led them to regroup under the name "Kalasan". They now considered themselves Pakpak rather than Toba, because their northern neighbours, the Pakpak Simsim, had also adopted the funerary rite advocated by Guru Kalasan. Every elderly Kalasan knows, however, that he is descended from Si Raja Batak, a fact denied by the members of the B'rutu *m'rga* of the Simsim, whose founder was supposedly also a Toba from the Sinaga *marga*, a proposition which is much debated.

The legends differ in each of the Kalasan *marga*, but once one has heard them all and they have been set down on paper, the repetitions become strongly apparent. At the origin, there is always the young son of an important Toba raja who is bullied (by a stepmother, a brother, or his own father) and who decides to take off, alone or in the company of his best friend. They have nothing but their clothes—which quickly become tattered from living outdoors and crossing through endless coppices—along with their weapons, their courage and their *sahala*. All prevail over the difficulties associated with their condition as wanderers, and all found clans whose descendants constitute not an enormous nation but a small population—a moderately prosperous people—living in harmony with their immediate neighbours, the Toba.

They have no magnificent, tall traditional houses (fig. 118). They never built any, not being numerous enough to undertake such construction projects. Then, after a few generations, in about the early seventeenth century, Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan makes his appearance. One would have to be well versed in religious ethnology and to have studied at length the traditional religion of the Toba, based on the early authors and on the unexamined documents left by H. Neubronner van der Tuuk, to know to what extent the Indian guru modified the ancestral religion called *ugamo perbegu*. For a historian it is important to reconstitute the genealogy of the clans, to identify which raja in each *marga* extended his hospitality to Guru Kalasan and listened to his advice. That gives us an approximate date for the adoption of cremation in place of the preservation of bones. We cannot go any further than that ...

I wonder, in fact, if it is still possible to isolate other rules given by the guru, since all the Kalasan were converted to Christianity at a rather late date by German missionaries, who refrained from telling us about them. Subsequently, in about 1910, the Kalasan more or less secretly adopted one of two sects, either *agama Si Singamangaraja* or *agama Si Raja Batak*, which seem to share the trait of revering Si Singamangaraja XII—as the “prophet of Mula Jadi na Bolon” in the first sect and as the “Son of Si Raja Batak” in the second. This information is controversial for some informants, and *parmali* specialist Ibrahim Gultom knows nothing about it.⁵ Apparently, there are many questions that I am the only one to have asked and which have not received an answer to this day.

The *marga* of the Kalasan

Let us leave aside these questions, which lie beyond my competence and the scope of my knowledge, and finally come to the heart of the matter. The Kalasan *marga* that claim to belong to the Pakpak group, and that are united by the cremation of ancestors’ bones and the making of “equestrian” figures, are five maybe six in number, though the last of them (the Marbun-Sehun) goes back and forth between two identities, which caused me a great deal of trouble. I have not found it possible to give the genealogies of all Kalasan *marga* within the framework of a short book, since each was based on a picturesque legend, the account of which is sometimes quite long.

I shall confine myself to transcribing the adventures of the founders of two important *marga* and shall set down the genealogy of my best informants, going back to these founders.

For the other *marga* (except for the Marbun-Sehun), I shall indicate the name of each founder and that of his father. I have no explanations to give, not having heard any from the informants.

The stories of two of the principal *marga* ought to suffice for understanding the situation of the Kalasan vis-à-vis, on one hand, the Toba, and, on the other, the Pakpak Simsim.

The six Kalasan *marga* are as follows: Kesugihen ("Hasogihon" in Toba), Tumanggor, Tinambunan, Pinayungan, Nahampun, and Marbun or Sehun to the south-west, near Pakkat, (whose union with the Kalasan people does not seem certain).⁶

The thirty-four Kalasan villages

These clans are the *marga raja* of the villages listed to the right (see also map, p. 37).⁷ For a first, small group of villages, I give the distance from Dolok Sanggul (and Pusuk) on the road to Parlilitan; for a second, from Parlilitan on the road to Huta Galung; and for a third, from Parlilitan on the road to Pakkat. For a fourth group of villages, I do not give the distances from Parlilitan on the way to Gonting, because Anthony Pardede did not record them.

Dolok Sanggul to Parlilitan (via Martiti Dua and Pusuk)

Huta Barati, 40 km, Kesugihen *marga raja* ("Hasogihon" in Toba)

Huta Amborgang

Huta Pinang, 42 km, Kesugihen *marga raja*
Parlilitan, 43 km, Kesugihen *marga raja*

Parlilitan to Huta Galung

Huta Siboar, 1 km, Kesugihen *marga raja*

Huta Simahu Janji, 2 km, Tinambunan *marga raja*

Huta Janji Inpres, 3 km, Tumanggor *marga raja*

Huta Simalihang, 5 km, Pinayungan *marga raja*

Huta Sitapung, 6 km, Tumanggor *marga raja*

Huta Singa, or Lae Ardan, 14 km, Nahampun *marga raja*

Huta Sijulangjulang, 15 km, Tumanggor *marga raja*

Huta Galung, 17 km, Tumanggor *marga raja*

Lebuhs⁸ Kuta Male, 17.6 km (abandoned),

Tumanggor *marga raja*

Kuta Simbayak,⁹ 18.6 km, Tumanggor *marga raja*

Parlilitan to Pakkat

Huta Sitinjo, 3 km, Kesugihen *marga raja*

Huta Gaman, 7 km, Kesugihen *marga raja*

Huta Sahumbu Pinim, 14 km, Marbun-Sehun *marga raja*

Huta Ampa Bulu, 3 km from the road leading to the mountains, Marbun-Sehun *marga raja*

[Huta Si Horbo, Manalu *marga raja*]

Several Toba villages follow.

Parlilitan to Gonting

Huta Simpan Sibulbulon, Kesugihen *marga raja*
 Huta Dalan, Kesugihen *marga raja*
 Huta Tornauli, Tinambunan *marga raja*
 Huta Ambassang Silima, Tinambunan *marga raja*
 Huta Silali, Tinambunan *marga raja*
 Huta Sumango, Tinambunan *marga raja*
 Huta Palenggam, Tinambunan *marga raja*
 Huta Nusa, Tinambunan *marga raja*
 Huta Seduan Bilik, Tinambunan *marga raja*
 Huta Nagatimbul, Tinambunan *marga raja*
 Huta Dolok, Tinambunan *marga raja*
 Huta Pea Raja, Nahampun *marga raja*
 [Huta Ambalo, Situmorang (Toba) *marga raja*,
 15 km from Parlilitan]
 [Huta Sita Pungan, Situmorang (Toba) *marga raja*,
 from there to Huta Galung, about 25 km by
 footpath. Negotiable by motorcycle in the dry
 season. Halfway between is Huta Pangarong,
marga raja unknown]
 Huta Gonting, Tumanggor *marga raja*¹⁰
 (from there, a footpath leads to Huta Sitapung
 via Uruk Tolong, unknown Kalasan *marga*
raja, about 20 km)

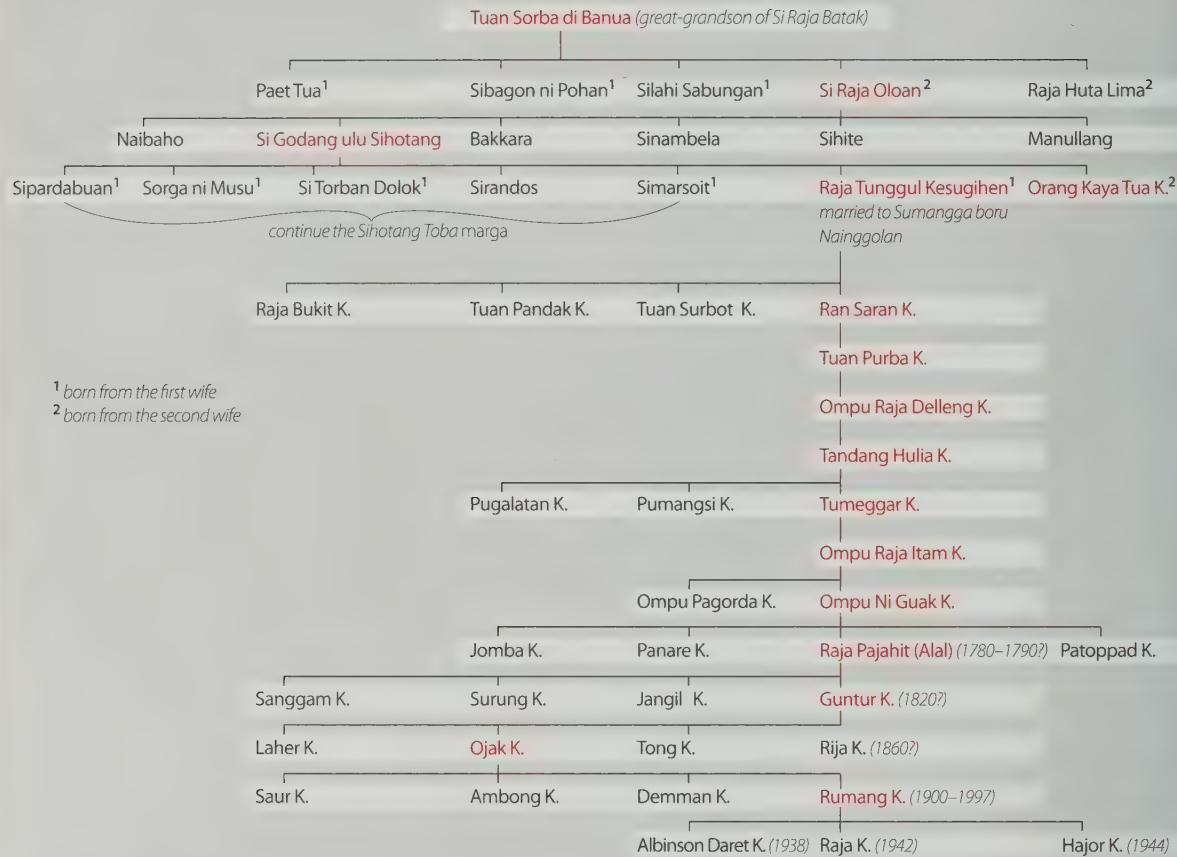
At the very northern limits of Kalasan country are two villages ruled by the Situmorang, descendants of Toba founders. We therefore know the exact boundaries of the territory of the Kalasan (see red dotted lines on the map, p. 37). This book introduces them to readers of all sorts, clearing the way for an ethnologist who could, among other things, verify what, for the Kalasan, lies within the realm of religion (*ugamo perbegu*) and what stems in particular from rules established by Guru Kalasan.

The genealogy of the Kesugihen-Hasogihon *marga*: The story of Raja Tunggul

The first Kalasan village as one travels toward Parlilitan from Dolok Sanggul, via Martiti Dua (soon after which, one leaves the road heading toward Pakkat and Barus) and Pusuk (the last Toba township), is Huta Barati, which has a twin hamlet called Huta Amborgang (fig. 118). The *marga raja*, for the first time since Dolok Sanggul, is not Toba but Kalasan. After the usual endless discussions, we are taken to an old man, toward whom everyone displays the greatest respect. This is Rumang Hasogihon. He introduces himself using the Toba form of his patronymic, as do all the members of the two villages. Only when we are farther from the Toba will we find "Kesugihen", the Pakpak form of the name. Rumang, born in 1900, was ninety years when we conducted our investigation in November 1990.¹¹ After a few preliminaries, he recites his genealogy at one go (see below). It was verified by other elderly members of the Hasogihon, or Kesugihen, *marga*. Slight corrections, especially as to the spelling of names, were made to Raja Rumang's version.¹²



Kesugihen *marga*, genealogy I (lineage of Raja Tunggul)



The other sons mentioned in each generation since Ran Saran continued to found villages or to live with a richer brother.

Si Godangulu Sihotang,¹³ his direct ancestor, had two wives. The first, boru Tamba, produced six male children, and the second, boru Simbolon, only one son, Orang Kaya Tua, whose descendants still live in Huta Gaman, also in Kalasan country, near Pakkat. But neither Rumang nor his family knows anything about those distant relations, whom Anthony Pardede would go to question during another trip and whom I will discuss later on.

The first five sons of Si Godangulu Sihotang continued the Sihotang *marga* in the Toba "native land". The youngest, named Raja Tunggul,¹⁴ was hated by his elder brothers, who equally hated their half-brother, Orang Kaya Tua.

One day, Si Godangulu Sihotang's second son, named Sorga ni Musu Sihotang, pushed his half-brother into a ravine. But Orang Kaya Tua survived. The victim's mother became so enraged that she counselled her son and his half-brother, Raja Tunggul, to leave the region. Better than that, she fled with them, to the great displeasure of her husband, who was

furious about that collective escape. The result was that the young men were given the name "Hasogihon", since in Toba *soga* means "angry, bitter". That became *sogi*, *sugi*, in the local Pakpak dialect, hence "Kesugihen".

Unfortunately, boru Simbolon fell ill and ultimately died. Her son and stepson cremated her. The ashes were wrapped in bark, and the young men flung them from the top of a mountain, now called Dolok Martimpus (*martimpus* means "to be wrapped, enveloped"). Note that this death occurred a good hundred years before Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan arrived, preaching the cremation of bones, not bodies. In that respect, the legend is doubly unbelievable.

In the company of his half-brother, the destitute Raja Tunggul lived on the yield from his hunts and on berries. During his excursions, he caught sight of a local Toba chieftain's daughter

answering to the name of Sumangga boru Nainggolan. The young man boldly presented himself to Sumangga's father and was rejected: dressed in rags, he had nothing arguing in his favour. Now it happened that the village of these Nainggolan was at war with another Toba village. Here was Raja Tunggul's opportunity: he gave a brilliant demonstration of his gifts as a magician, projecting through the air an enormous stone mortar (*losung na boi habang*)¹⁵ to destroy the enemy chieftain's house (fig. 119). Then, against the half-vanquished raja, he sent the magical *si biangsa*¹⁶ preparation to complete his victory, which was total. That great feat so impressed the subjects of the young lady's father that the raja agreed on the spot to give her to Raja Tunggul. Following custom (a groom would find a *marga boru* among the Nainggolan), the raja offered the young couple a parcel of land (*pauseang*). He specified that its area would consist of "what a buffalo skin can



Fig. 119 This stone mortar (*losung batu*) is similar to the one that the magician Raja Tunogul projected through the air, demolishing the house of the enemies of the Nainggolan. Samosir, eastern shore. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, March 1987.

delimit." The cunning Raja Tunggul cut up a skin into thin strips, so thin that they formed a very long rope, with which he circumscribed the territory now called Parlilitan (*lilit* means "to encircle" in Toba) (figs 115–17). It is amusing to note that this story also exists in Mediterranean mythology: Dido founded Carthage in the same manner. That trick is known to mathematicians as the isoperimetric problem.

Raja Tunggul Hasogihon, or Kesugihen, thus gave rise to the township of Parlilitan. Its current chieftain is one of his descendants, who constitute the *marga raja*. Over the centuries, these same descendants created other villages, of which they are still the rajas, as indicated on the list (pp. 140–41) accompanying the map of Kalasan country.

Such a remarkable individual attracted notice from afar and left an indelible mark on people's memories. Vergouwen mentions him;¹⁷ Hoetagaloeng,¹⁸ notably, tells his story in a rather different way. He calls him "Tunggul" and not "Tunggal" (as other people do) and identifies the spiteful father-in-law, one Raja Matatunggal Nainggolan.¹⁹ The enemies were in fact Simanullang (the name was simplified to "Manullang"), which means that the region was already partly occupied by Toba. Hoetagaloeng does not neglect to recount with delight the story of the buffalo skin cut up into strips.

Curiously, Raja Tunggul, a figure as admired as he was powerful and wealthy, did not merit an effigy of himself perched on a stone quadruped, once his descendants adopted the precepts of Guru Kalasan about a hundred years later.



Fig. 120 Irrigated rice fields (*hauma saba*) on cleared land in Kalasan country. Near Huta Amborgang. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

At a fairly recent date (probably about 120 years ago), Raja Pajahit Hasogihon, a fourth-generation ancestor of the informant Rumang, was given his *mejan*. Although it is protected from the rain by thick vegetation, it is rather damaged. Its right side has recently been extensively and poorly restored with cement (fig. 121). It is immediately apparent that this is a harnessed horse, with none of the traits suggesting that a *singa* is concealed behind the equine. That is also the case for two Toba *mejan* located very near Dolok Sanggul, about 50 kilometres from Parlilitan (see pp. 170–71), as will be clear when we examine how the Kalasan influenced the funerary rituals of the Toba Batak—as far away as Sibolga, in the regency of Tapanuli Tengah, but more strongly, of course, in the Upper and Lower Barus.



Fig. 121 *Mejan* of Raja Pajahit Hasogihon, carved about 120 years ago. This is the only Kalasan "horseman" riding a true horse. Although protected by thick vegetation, it is very damaged and has been clumsily restored with white cement. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

The somewhat surprising presence of that *mejan* taking the form of a horse may be the result of the directives of Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan, as reported by Rumang Hasogihon. The non-existence of other *mejan* in the township itself and in its immediate vicinity was explained by the raja of Parlilitan in 1990. According to him, there used to be one or several *mejan* in every Kalasan village, four or five of them in Parlilitan. Some were sold, he said, others stolen, and the police of Si Borongborong, without giving a reason, supposedly confiscated twelve of them and had them taken away in trucks. It is clear that they will never be returned to their owners. As a result, there are currently a rather small number of stone statues in the region, some of them very damaged by the elements (fig. 122), smashed to the point of becoming unrecognizable, or "repaired" with cement in a manner so disastrous that the sculptor's work is irremediably disfigured.



Fig. 122 Former *mejan* of the wife of Raja Tanggor Tumanggor, who came from Toba country to found the Kalasan clan to which he gave his name (fifteenth or sixteenth century). This sculpture attests to the state of deterioration of a large number of Kalasan monuments. Village of Kuta Sibayak, near the mountain called Deleng Sempong. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 1995.



Fig. 123 "Equestrian" effigy of the Toba Sinamo *marga* one lineage of which settled in Pakpak Simsim country. Kuta Santar, near Salak. It shares strong stylistic similarities with the horseman of the Pasemah Plateau already mentioned. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Jana Ansermet, June 1987.

Among the most beautiful of these, let me mention the two ancestral statues of the Nahampun *marga* (figs 124a–b, 125) in the village of Pea Raja (between Parlilitan and Gintong), including a magnificent “horseman” on a *singa* with a “fish mouth” opening wide to reveal a slightly coiled tongue. For a time (in about 2008), it was restored, endowed with an enormous pointed nose made of cement, which left one of my friends—whom Anthony Pardede was escorting on a tour of Batak country—overcome by sadness. By chance, the reparation did not withstand the equatorial rains, and today it has recovered its flat face (its reliefs must never have been very prominent, as is evident on the less damaged of the Kalasan *mejan*). Unfortunately, in 2011 the other “horseman”, stocky and riding an elephant with an enormous trunk (fig. 125) was no longer to be seen. Was it sold? Moved? Broken? Anything can happen: even inopportune, horrid restorations, which make it impossible to know what is original

under that cement plaster. A good example (and we shall see others) is provided us by the three *mejan* of Huta Lae Ardan, whose *marga raja* is Nahampun: placed in front of them are not cinerary urns but stone receptacles intended for offerings (fig. 127). The three cinerary urns disappeared long ago.

“Offering pots” are not an invention of the Kalasan. They borrowed them, like the *mejan*, from the Pakpak Simsim; or, if you like, they belong to the funerary traditions instituted by Guru Kalasan. This is attested by a full view of the two beautiful Simsim *mejan* of Uruk Gantung, representing, on the right, Raja Tambe Boang Manalu, and, on the left, his wife, Boru Sinamo. In front of the man are receptacles for offerings. The receptacle previously located in front of the woman was used to support the head of the mount (pp. 160–61 and figs 133–35). The *mejan* of Boru Sinamo was sold in 2010 by a Balinese antique dealer and is now in the United States.

Figs 124a and b The *mejan* of Huta Pea Raja (Nahampun *marga*), one of the most beautiful in Kalasan country, surrounded by stone receptacles for offerings. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photos Anthony Pardede (124a), 1996 and Helder Da Silva (124b), 2011.



Fig. 126 Kalasan man lifting the lid from a cinerary urn in Lebuh Rumerah, amid the debris of antique *mejan* and receptacles for offerings. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 2009.

In 2011, just before I published this book, I took care to send a photographer, Helder Da Silva, to verify the monuments in Kalasan country. The report is nothing short of disastrous. There was already little remaining in about 2003. Now the debris is abundant, and only a few "horsemen" remain nearly intact, the most recent of them almost always disfigured by reparations and "embellishments" in cement. Let us end that sad digression.

Neither the descendants of Raja Tunggul nor those of his half-brother mention their former membership in the Sihotang *marga*, even though their genealogy provides proof of that origin. In other words, they did not consider themselves the *marga boru* of the Nainggolan after the unexpected marriage concluded by Raja Tunggul. His children and those of his half-brother very quickly separated themselves from the Sihotang *marga*, to which Tunggul and Orang Kaya Tua belonged, and founded the Hasogihon *marga*. Vis-à-vis the



Fig. 125 Second *mejan* (unfinished) of Huta Pea Raja, now missing. abm—archives Barbier-Mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 1996.



Fig. 127 The three *mejan* of Huta Lae Ardan, representing the early ancestors of the Nahampun *marga*. In very poor condition, they were the object of a restoration in cement so radical that it is no longer possible to know whether any original fragment remains in these clumsy, graceless sculptures. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 2009.



Nainggolan, they do not appear to have maintained the humble attitude of a *marga boru* toward its *marga hulahula*.²⁰ Or was that Toba kinship relation undermined by the adoption of Guru Kalasan's teachings? They themselves do not consider that possibility: they say they have been Hasogihon, or Kesugihen, since Raja Tunggul founded Parlilitan and have always cremated the bones of their ancestors—and not the body directly, as the legend of boru Simbolon being incinerated by her sons might lead one to believe. That is obviously impossible. In terms of religion, many of them are followers of the *agama Si Singamangaraja*,²¹ the religion venerating the famous magician and war chief nicknamed "Ompu Pulo Batu,"²² who died in Parlilitan in 1907 (he was a Toba who had taken refuge in the Upper Barus).

The genealogy provided by Rumang Hasogihon calls for a number of comments. First, since Tuan Sorba di Banua is the great-grandson of Si Raja Batak, only eighteen generations (*sundut*) separate Rumang from the mythic ancestor of the Toba. That would situate the arrival of the Toba on the Pusuk Buhit volcano about 550 years ago, if we count thirty years per generation. And even with a more generous count, we still arrive at a date that is impossible to accept. What sinister cuts were inflicted on that genealogy to eliminate individuals with a less than glowing reputation? Or to what extent did the Hasogihon lose a few generations of the Sihotang *marga* along the way?

I have not forgotten that no *marga* is capable of giving us the names of their ancestors and of providing us with the some sixty to seventy generations that would take us back to the start of the Christian Era, a plausible moment for the settlement of the mountainous high plateaux

surrounding Lake Toba to have occurred. In about 1985 the Situmorang of Lontung laid out twenty-four generations between the sexagenarians of that time and the founding ancestor. The Pardede enumerated twenty-one; one or two *marga* counted close to thirty, no more than that.

For the Kalasan, things are simpler. In the case of the founders of clans who came a few centuries ago from Toba country, it is likely that no mythic element has been introduced into the list of ancestors, which all the elderly Batak have at their fingertips.

Those in Parlilitan who were sexagenarians in 1995 were the twelfth-generation descendants of Raja Tunggul. Those of Huta Gaman (see map, p. 37) were separated from his half-brother, Orang Kaya Tua, by thirteen generations, but these interlocutors were younger than the Parlilitan informants. In that respect, the two Hasogihon brothers were surpassed by the Tumanggor (see their genealogy below): Raja Tanggor of the Toba Simbolon *marga* is separated by sixteen generations from the informant Timbang Tumanggor. The Tumanggor were supposedly the first arrivals and settled in Huta Galung and in Lebuh Kuta Male, at the foot of Dolok Sempong, one of the two highest mountains in the rocky chain separating the Pakpak Kalasan from the Pakpak Simsims.

These thirteen generations clearly show that the genealogies are truncated. In fact, it would take only a handful more among the Sihotang to arrive at the mythic ancestor Si Raja Batak. Hoetagaloe's *tarombo* (genealogical table) of the Sihotang speaks volumes on this point.

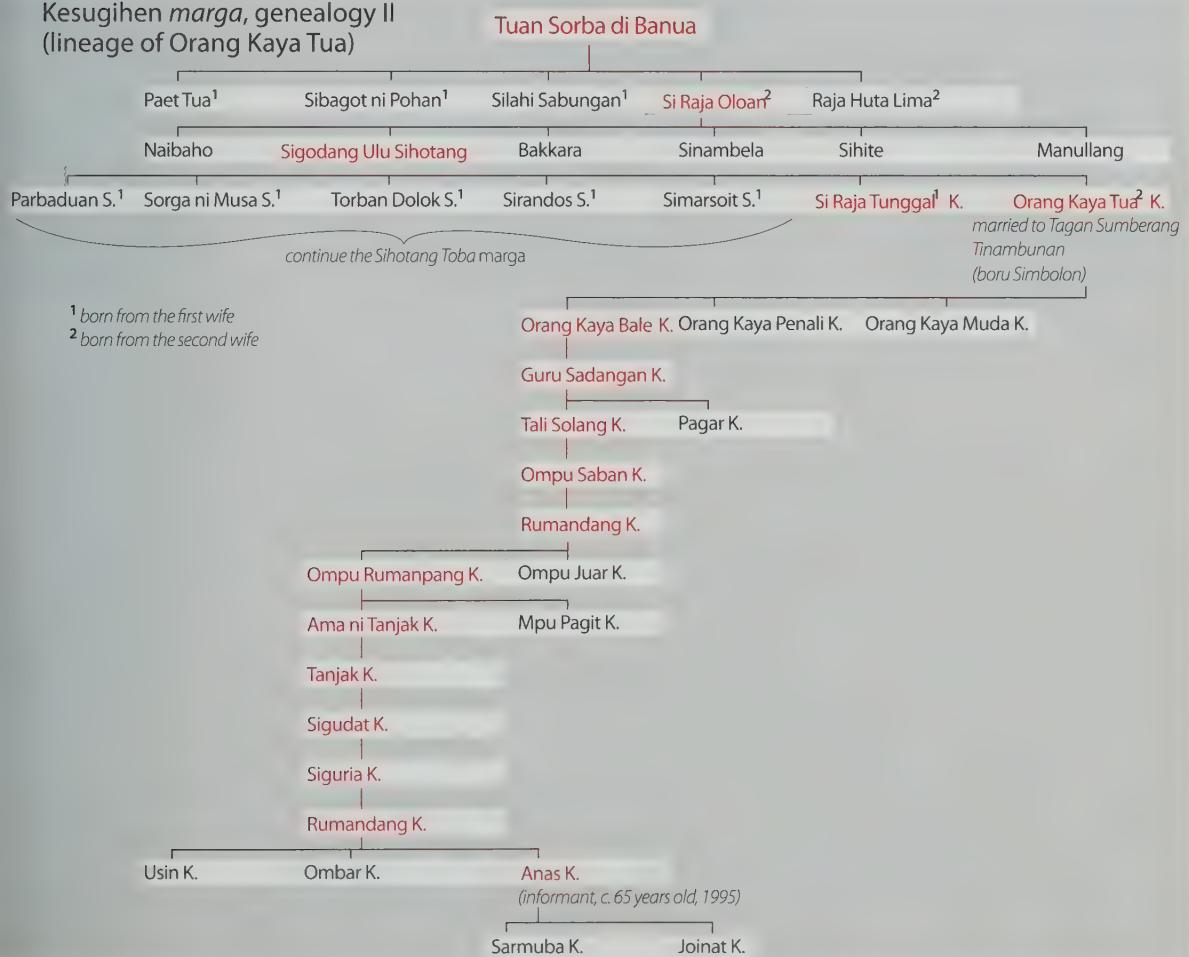
The genealogy of the Kesugihen-Hasogihon: The story of Orang Kaya Bale. The founders of the three other Kalasan *marga*

Our informant is Anas Hasogihon, about sixty-five years old in October 1995 and a thirteenth-generation descendant of Orang Kaya Tua (see genealogy below). He says that his ancestor married a woman named Tagan Sumberang Tinambunan (boru Simbolon). The Tinambunan Kalasan *marga* is descended from Tuan Nahoda Raja Simbolon, also known as

Simbolon Raja, several of whose sons founded Kalasan *marga*: namely, Tinambunan, father of the aforementioned Tagan Sumberang; Tanggor, founder of the Tumanggor *marga*; and Pinayungan and Nahampun. Raja Tanggor's most illustrious descendant was Mpu Lenggem Tumanggor who lived in Kuta Sibayak (fig. 122).

This means that, with the exception of the Marbun-Sehun, all the Kalasan clans are descended from two Toba *marga*, the Sihotang and the Simbolon.

Kesugihen *marga*, genealogy II
(lineage of Orang Kaya Tua)





Figs 128a and b Portrait in three-quarter profile, front and back, presumed to be of Tagan Sumberang Tinambunan boru Simbolon, discussed at length in the body of the text. The statue is located in the first Toba village (Manalu *marga*) as you leave Kalasan country for Pakkat, which is close by. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photos Helder Da Silva, 2011.

Orang Kaya Tua's half-brother, Raja Tunggul, married Sumangga boru Nainggolan, whose mother belonged to the Simbolon *marga*. Since Tagan Sumberang Tinambunan's father, Raja Tinambunan, also belonged to the Simbolon *marga*, it emerged from the informant's remarks that Orang Kaya Tua could not marry a girl belonging to the same *marga* as the mother of his half-brother's wife. The same man explained that the Simbolon *marga* was *bao* for Orang Kaya Tua.

After reading the examples Warneck gives in his Toba-Batak-German dictionary,²³ and

after speaking about them with elderly Toba well informed about the prohibitions formerly in force, I do not believe that the situation in which the two half-brothers found themselves ought to have constituted "incest" or to have fallen within the provisions of a different rule of the *adat*, as regards the marriage of the younger of them. Perhaps there was another factor unknown to our informant?

In any event, Raja Tunggul flew into a horrible rage and drove Orang Kaya Tua away. He did not go very far. Seven kilometres south of Parlilitan, he founded a village called Huta

Gaman. The Hasogihon descending from the exiled brother still constitute the *marga raja*.

But the story does not end here. It came to pass that Orang Kaya Tua died. His wife, Tagan Sumberang Tinambunan boru Simbolon, married a second time, to a member of the Marbun *marga*. After that husband died in turn, boru Simbolon wed a third time, to a member of the Manalu-Rambe Toba *marga*,²⁴ which, like the Simbolon, is from the Sumba "moiety".²⁵ In the end, she also died and was cremated.²⁶ Each of the *marga* of her three husbands laid claim to the ashes, and the Simbolon *marga* also wanted its share (it is odd that, in reference to her, no one ever speaks of the Tinambunan *marga* founded by her father, and that everyone always mentions his original *marga*).

The Simbolon's claim was dismissed, and it was determined that the ashes would be divided as follows:

- those from the part comprising the head down to the chest would go to the Hasogihon;
- those from the chest to the navel, to the Marbun of Huta Sahombu Pinim;
- those from the part of the body beginning below the navel and going down to the feet, to the Manalu.

These are Toba living in the first village you come to after leaving Kalasan country on the road between Parlilitan and Pakkat, who have preserved a funerary (or prestige) monument representing a woman with a very flat chest, whose ear takes the form of the foliated design typical of the Toba, which is never seen among the Kalasan (figs 128a–b). The woman, neither disfigured by patch-up jobs in cement nor hideously smeared with chemical paint, is placed atop a tall *tugu* in white concrete.

Villagers swear that it is Tagan Sumberang Tinambunan boru Simbolon's faithful portrait.

The cremation took place in the Toba village of Huta Hauagong near Pakkat. Based on our informant's statements, it is possible to think that the body was burned immediately and divided up in conformity with the judgment rendered. Once again, all this is extremely bizarre. Orang Kaya Tuya and his wife, boru Simbolon, were the first Hasogihon (along with the half-brother, Raja Tunggul) to make a home in the Upper Barus. Yet the Kalasan themselves tell us that Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan did not arrive until a few generations later. Orang Kaya Tua and all the parties to the dispute were Toba, and no Toba would have ever burned a body!

I readily grant that, on the orders of Guru Kalasan, people produced funerary statues of "horsemen" for ancestors who had died more than a hundred years earlier. But the claim that they engaged in cremation before the Indian guru came to teach that funerary practice makes all the accounts provided us very suspect. I must say that it is also rather typical of the Batak's manipulation of the genealogies and biographies of their ancestors.

Hence the necessity, I believe, of envisioning more than fifty generations (a great number, I know), not some thirty, between Si Raja Batak and his present-day descendants, as I said in my introduction devoted to the Prehistory of North Sumatra and the establishment of the Batak in Sumatra.

Among the Toba, I have never been able to establish proof of any "gap", any considerable rigging of the genealogies, as we have just seen among the



Fig. 129a *Mejan* of Raja Empas Sehun in Huta Ampa Bulu, southern edge of Kalasan country, on the road between Parilitan and Pakkat. The statue has been cleaned. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, February 1996.

Hasogihon, who obviously cannot be considered Kalasan before the arrival of Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan and who must necessarily have followed the laws of the Toba *adat*. That is, once the flesh was gone from the bones, these were exhumed and deposited in an appropriate receptacle. Someone might reply that the founders of the *marga* destined to become clans of the Kalasan people buried their dead, but that the bones were unearthed and burned after Guru Kalasan ordered it. But in that case, how was the exact location of the part "from the chest to the navel" on the skeleton of Tagan Sumberan boru Simbolon determined?

No stone "equestrian" statue of Orang Kaya Tua was erected in his village of Huta Gaman. By contrast, a modest sculpture of his son Orang Kaya Bale Hasogihon, with the head still in place, can be seen there. This statue must be between 350 and 400 years old, since twelve generations separate our informant Anas from his ancestor Orang Kaya Bale. Unfortunately, that ancestor did not leave behind the memory of a great leader or a great magician. It is no longer known why a monument was later devoted to him, in conformance with Guru Kalasan's instructions.



Fig. 129b The same *mejan* photographed again fifteen years later. In both images, elephant tusks in slight relief are apparent. It would be the only Kalasan elephant known. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

The genealogy of the Tumanggor

A small path leaves Parlilitan, heading toward the mountain chain that blocks the horizon, where the Dolok (or Deleng in Pakpak) Sempong reaches its highest point. Seventeen kilometres from the starting point is a small village named Huta Galung (not to be confused with the large Toba village of Hutagalung seen on the map p. 37, between Dolok Sanggul and Tele and whose *marga raja* is Lumban Gaol).

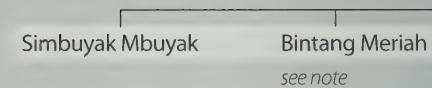
Huta Galung was built not by Raja Galung, grandson of the Tumanggor's founder, Raja

Tanggor—himself the son of Tuan Nahodaraja Simbolon (see the genealogical table, p. 154)—but by Raja Galung's son.

Astonishingly, it is supposedly the *mejan* of Tuan Tanggor himself that is (poorly) preserved in Lebuh Kuta Male, an abandoned village 600 metres from Huta Galung. It is accompanied by the “equestrian” statue of his wife, boru Limpong (figs 130–31). The two statues—about four hundred years old if they were created upon the “conversion” of the Kalasan by the Indian guru—are in a state of ruin. Without hesitation, the

Genealogy of the Tumanggor Kalasan *marga*

given by Timbang Tumanggor (60 years old in 1995)

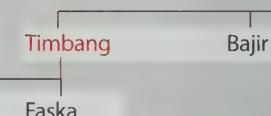


Note

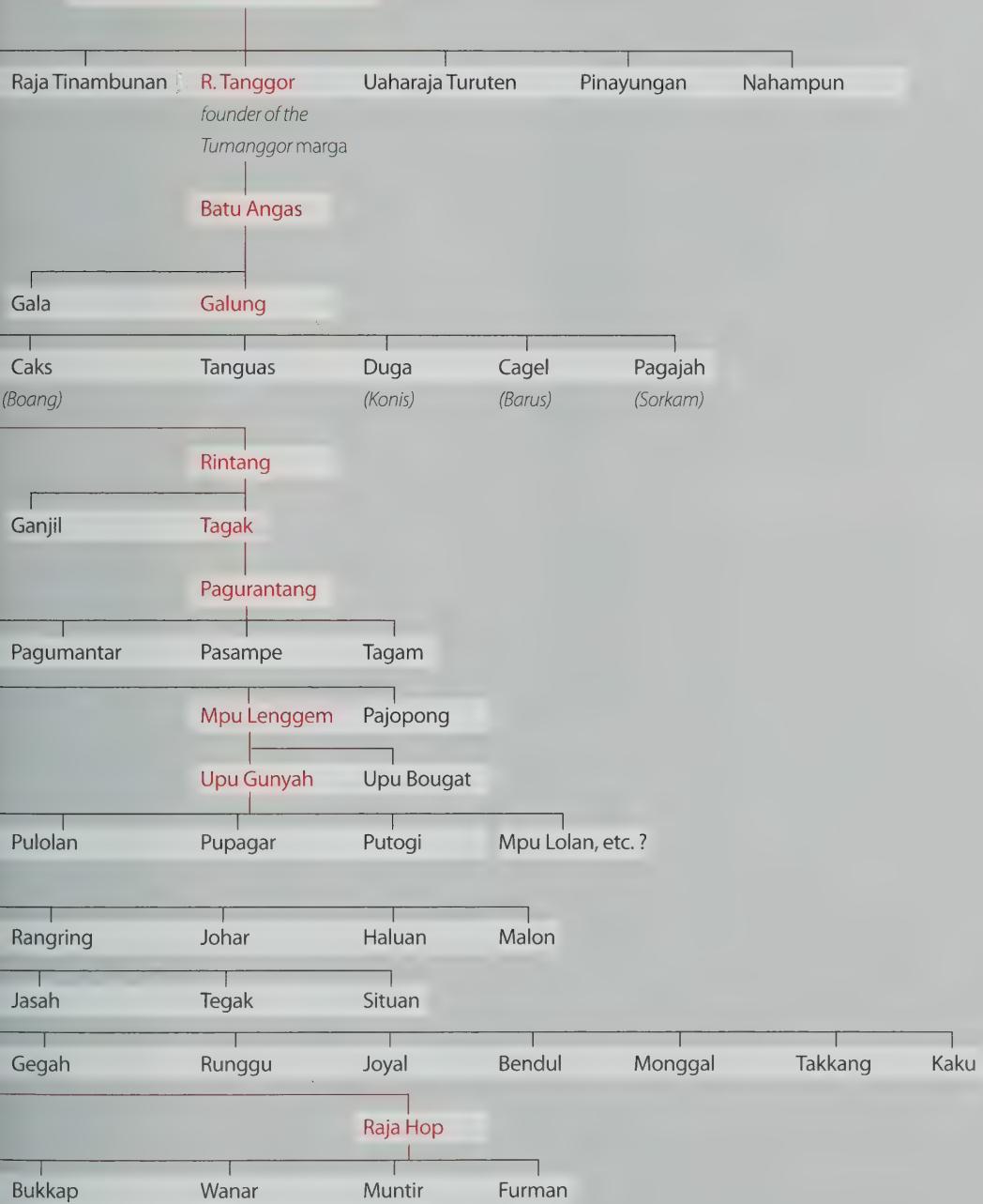
Bintang Meriah boru Simbolon married Raja Parhulas Nainggolan and gave birth to Sumange boru Nainggolan, wife of Raja Tungkul



Kadum



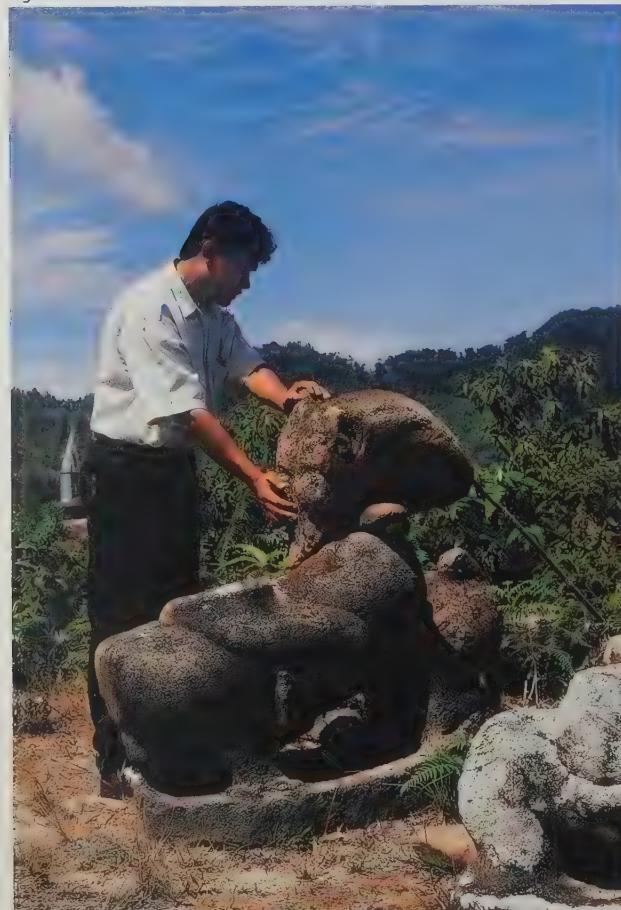
Tuan Nahodaraja Simbolon married to boru Hutagalung (who had one son)



Figs 130 and 131 *Mejan* of Tuan Tanggor, accompanied by the "equestrian" statue of his wife boru Limpong in Lebuh Kuta Male, an abandoned village near Huta Galung.
abm-archives barbier-mueller. Photos Anthony Pardede, 1995.



Fig. 131



informant, named Ama ni Hitler²⁷ Tumanggor, points out the statue of the raja and that of his wife. It is now impossible to determine their sex. It appears that the head of one of the mounts, lying on the ground, is that of a horse. The statues are accompanied by a cinerary urn, rather misshapen, without a lid.

The Tumanggor proved to be surprisingly sedentary, possessing only four villages, all crowded together on the rough path connecting Parlilitan to Huta Galung. In addition, these villages are extremely modest. Farther away from Huta Galung, a kilometre from Lebuh Kuta Male, can be seen, in Huta Simbayak, the *mejan* of Mpu Lenggem Tumanggor (fig. 132), eighth-generation ancestor of the informant Timbang Tumanggor (sixty-five years old in 1995). That would lead us to believe it is about two hundred and fifty years old. The mount's head is also lying on the ground in this case. It is indisputably an elephant with large ears, which I have never seen represented on any Kalasan "horseman". It is hard to imagine the man's head, his arm, and the end of the elephant's tail touching the horseman's back.

Of the nine villages between Parlilitan and the mountains, not counting Lebuh Kuta Male, five have Tumanggor *marga raja*. Did they once possess *mejan*, not having been as impoverished as one might suspect? The other villages belong to the Hasogihon (the one closest to Parlilitan), the Tinambunan, the Pinayungan and the Nahampun.

The last three of these *marga* were founded by sons of Tuan Nahodaraja Simbolon, brothers of Tanggor, who founded the Tumanggor *marga*.

The *marga* they founded bear their names, without any modification, unlike that of Raja Tanggor, ancestor of the Tumanggor. It does not seem that the Tumanggor behave in a superior manner because they are much more numerous than their neighbours. Apart from the Tumanggor statues in ruins mentioned above, there are only the three *mejan* of the Nahampun *marga* left (fig. 127), which the villagers of Huta Lae Ardan²⁸ say are contemporary with Raja Tanggor: hence their state of decrepitude, which led to their "reconstruction". But they cannot have been made before Raja Tanggor's descendants received the good word from Guru Kalasan, four hundred years ago at most—a respectable span

of time—like the *mejan* of Raja Tanggor himself, though nothing of the original sculptures is visible any longer. Nor is it possible to draw any conclusion from the fact that the Pinayungan, unlike the Hasogihon, the Turnanggor, and the Nahampun, do not possess any stone statues of their ancestors. Many elderly people of the region (like the raja of Parlilitan) say that, in the past, every village without exception had its *mejan*, one or more of them. Based on the number of villages and on what the old people say, there may have been a good hundred "horsemen" within the limits of Kalasan country. To my knowledge, there are none in collections, private or public, a troublesome sign.

Fig. 132 *Mejan* of Mpu Lenggem Tumanggor in Kuta Simbayak. The only *mejan* likely to represent an elephant with big ears abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 1995.



Notes

- 1.** Wilhelm Volz ("Nord Sumatra, Bericht über eine im Auftrage der Humboldt-Stiftung in den Jahren 1904–1906 ausgeführte Forschungsreise" in *Die Batakländer*, vol. 1, 1909) visited only the Western Karo and the Northern Pakpak, even though he called his book "Batak Country". He therefore saw no stone "equestrian" statues, which are specific to the two Southern Pakpak groups: the Simsim and the Kalasan. Despite the misunderstanding created by the title, Volz's work is remarkable in every respect. He is the *only one* to have left behind photographic documents and drawings that show us details of Western Karo architecture, proving that that people considered the horizontal beams supporting the middle part of their houses (the dwelling proper) and ending in the heads of fantastic animals (*takal singa*) as the body of the cosmic serpent. *Takal singa* is a word that is practically forgotten by the present-day Karo, who maintain that these animal motifs represent horses (*kuda-kuda*).
- 2.** These five regions do not correspond to what Vergouwen, speaking of the Toba, calls the "head *marga*", since the Batak have no name for the "mother *marga*" or for those that detached themselves from it to become independent *marga*. There is no "head *marga*" with a Kalasan name that would be divided into the five or six *marga*—whose names, and those of their founders, I provide below.
- 3.** Personal communication of Helder Da Silva, during his photographic mission to Kalasan country in March 2011.
- 4.** For a reason unknown to me, the Kalasan and their Toba neighbours, followers of the syncretic religion in question (like those who profess the other religion, called *Si Raja Batak*) use the word *agama* (which is Malay Bahasa) rather than *ugamo*, which belongs to the Toba vocabulary. Both words mean "religion".
- 5.** Replies to my questions of March 2011.
- 6.** For the Marbun-Sehun, who sometimes aspire be only Marbun or only Sehun, I have at least four poorly structured narratives of origin, one of which rejects any kinship with the Toba Marbun and Sehun. Let us say, therefore, that I have five and not six genealogies of *marga* declaring they are Kalasan. The Marbun-Sehun could be a Toba *marga* practising cremation but without calling themselves Kalasan, which is also the case for the Silaban. Neighbours of the Kalasan, the Silaban glorified their ancestors by means of "equestrian" statues, which are less archaic than those of the Marbun. Some Marbun villages consider themselves Kalasan, others Toba. Only the researcher prepared to spend a long time in the field might be able to clear up that question.
- 7.** Some large villages are divided into neighbourhoods that could be considered villages. As a result, we have attempted to count the village chieftains instead. But my tally of thirty-four is not guaranteed, since I could not fully verify it.
- 8.** Lobu in Toba. A deserted village, sometimes with only the embankment surrounding it visible, reduced to a bulge of earth. Among the Tumanggor, the statues of ancestors, very damaged, have remained.
- 9.** We are at the foot of Deleng Sempong Mountain. The word "village" suddenly becomes the Pakpak *kuta* rather than the Toba *huta*. That is undoubtedly because of the proximity of the Simsim, who can be reached by motorcycle through a mountain pass inaccessible by car.
- 10.** The distances in kilometres from Parlilitan were not written down on that trip, which I did not take. Since the road was very bad, Anthony Pardede did not record them, even though he went there four times, either on my behalf or to allow old friends to visit Batak country far from the tourists. The Pea Raja road is sometimes accessible by car, but not during the rainy season, hence the dotted lines on the map, p. 37. The other trips indicated by dotted lines are accessible only by "all-terrain" motorcycles and on foot. My thanks to Helder Da Silva, who retraced that trip, taking photos, particularly of the beautiful *mejan* of Huta Pea Raja.
- 11.** Anthony met him for the first time in 1990.
- 12.** Some young people call him that, not because he is the village chieftain but out of deference. Recall the words of Doli Situmorang: "All the Batak are rajas, since they are descended from Si Raja Batak."
- 13.** One brother of Si Godang ulu Sihotang was named Sinambela. His descendants founded the *marga* of the same name, to which the notorious Si Singamangaraja XII belonged. Apparently, such an extraction was incompatible with the magical powers that that line of rajas, formidable sorcerers, and fearsome warriors possessed, resulting in certain legends concerning its conception. *Hotang* is the word for "rattan". *Godang* means "great, powerful"; *ulu*, "head", is frequently used to name a chief, a leader of men. Such "great names" might have been acquired following extraordinary feats marked by a great celebration and many sacrifices of buffaloes as it was the case in Nias. That possibility, I believe, has never been considered or studied.
- 14.** Such is the name given in the old chronicles. The Hasogihon-Kesugihen now insist on his being called Raja Tunggal (*tunggal* means "virile").
- 15.** The stone mortar (*losong batu*) becomes a *losung na boi habang* if a magician uses it like a military shell, sending it flying to destroy an enemy village. In the accounts that the Toba give of their ancestors' feats, "to make the mortar fly through the air" (*pahabang losung*) is one of the most frequently cited. That is not to say that they decline to mention the powerful magical preparations, such as the *si biaksa* or *si biangsa*, which contains *pupuk*, or *sihat* (the latter name, Voorhoeve told

me, is preferred in books of magic), parts of the brain or other organs of a human being sacrificed for that express purpose: formerly a child, and after colonization, the body of an accident victim or a stillborn child "sent by the gods", I was told by Guru Karel Sibuea. But that aspect of the magician's art seems less martial to them. Seen almost everywhere in Toba country are enormous stones with polished surfaces and with three to six holes piercing them. They are used in everyday life to grind rice or millet. No need to ask whether it is a *losung na boi habang*: the answer is always yes!

16. Rumang Hasogihon does not appear to know what exactly the so-called *si biaksa* or *si biangsa* preparation is, though he is perfectly familiar with its use by his glorious ancestor. Conversely, very close by, the Toba of Huta Sipang, near Pusuk, will speak of it with a certain pride and will show a sculpture that was "activated" by a human sacrifice, that of a little girl abducted from a neighbouring village. They refuse to give the name of the "fetish": it bears that of the little girl, and even today they fear reprisals from the victim's *marga*.

17. Vergouwen 1964, p. 13.

18. Hoetagaloeng 1926, p. 208 ff.

19. The genealogy of the Mahulae of Lumban Lobu, another village near Pusuk, calls him Datu Parhulas Nainggolan. It is possible that, in the course of his life, he took a "great magician's name" after performing certain rituals and abandoned his birth name.

20. We are obviously reporting what we see today. We do not know whether it was the children of Raja Tungkul who emancipated themselves or whether that emancipation occurred a few generations later. The large share of vanity, of boastfulness, that pervades the Toba or Kalasan genealogies makes me cautious. But there is one fact: it is possible to establish that Raja Tungkul was able to settle in Parlilitan thanks to an advantageous marriage to the daughter of a powerful local raja (who, it will be noted, was also Toba). It is customary in such situations to call the *marga hulahula* to which the clan owes its rapid ascent *bona ni ari* (literally, "the beginning of days"). That is always the case in the genealogies when a boy marries a girl above his station in terms of wealth, or when his wife brings him political or military alliances. During all the genealogical cross-checking we did among the Hasogihon, or Kesugihen, living in different villages, no Hasogihon ever referred to the Nainggolan as his *bona ni ari*.

21. For an unexplained reason, they say *agama* and not *ugamo*.

22. "Grandfather Stone Island."

23. Warneck 1977, p. 27.

24. The Manalu and the Rambe are both descended from the Simamora *marga* (Vergouwen 1964, p. 14). But they are very distinct. It seems that the Rambe occupied

a territory in the Upper Barus, where they welcomed Manalu (ibid.). A Manalu lineage from the "native land" came to settle near Pakkat but never grew large enough to form an independent *marga*.

25. See Vergouwen 1964, pp. 14 and 6, for the *marga* descending from Nai Suanon, third daughter of Tuan Sorimangaraja, wife of Tuan Sorba di Banua.

26. The informants and certain authors speak of the cremation of bodies. In many places, I was told that the bones were burned after the flesh was gone. Perhaps the expression "burn a body" is a way of making the story shorter? I am sorry I was unable to clarify this point.

27. *Ama ni* means "father of". I have already mentioned that Toba custom, adopted by the Kalasan, of taking the name of one's eldest son preceded by "father of". In the present case, the son had been given the first name "Hitler" a fair number of years after the end of World War II. The use of that name was noted in Sulawesi, among the Toraja, by my friend Nigel Barley. This is the first time I have heard of it in Sumatra, among the Batak. Clearly, the patronymic of the mad dictator was judged harmonious by the Toba. Let me add that, for them, "Washington" is also quite highly valued as a given name. But that name is not as amusing as the one belonging to the man who rented me a boat in Parapat: he was called Jules-Verne Ambarita!

28. In the neighbouring villages, that hamlet is also called Huta Singa Ardan.

At left, statue of boru Sinamo, wife of Raja Tambe Boang Manalu in the Pakpak Simsim village of Uruk Gantung, south-west of Salak. This sculpture is accompanied by the equestrian effigy of her husband. The stone bowls in the foreground are for offerings. The cinerary urns have disappeared. abm-archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 1993.



Chapter VIII The role of Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan





Fig. 133 In the foreground, the *mejan* of boru Sinamo, wife of Raja Tambe Boang Manalu. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 1993.



Fig. 134 Raja Tambe Boang Manalu (foreground), chieftain of the village of Uruk Gantung in Pakpak Simsim country. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 1993.

THE ROLE OF GURU MPU PANDIA KALASAN

The Kalasan village chieftains who are indicated as having been the “students” of a sage arriving from India appear in the genealogies fourteen or fifteen generations before our informants, who were in their sixties in 1990–96, the date of my investigation. To be cautious, we must therefore situate the guru’s arrival about four hundred years ago. For the sake of convenience, let us adopt the date of 1600. We must not forget that a comparison between the genealogies we collected and those laboriously amassed by Hoetagaloeng and published in Toba in a key work of 1926, brings to light some differences.

We gathered the names of individuals unknown to him, and vice versa. Sometimes he attributes a single son to someone who for us has several. It is likely that the Kalasan (like the Toba) have a tendency to make a gifted younger son who has become famous the eldest of his phratry.

Rumang Hasogihon calls the India sage Guru Kalasan. The Tumanggor of Huta Galung call him Guru Mpu (or Ompu) Pandia Kalasan. Among the Pakpak Simsim of the Pakpak Bharat regency, where he dispensed his teachings before making his way to the Kalasan, he is called Guru Kelasen.

This information was collected by Anthony Pardede (I never went so far into Simsim country) in the village of Uruk Gantung, in the *kabupaten* of Pakpak Bharat, whose seat is Salak. The *m’rga raja* of the village is the Boang Manalu. Two magnificent *mejan* can be seen there (pp. 160–61). The sculpture representing the woman, boru Sinamo, on the left, is about 150 years old: compared to the Kalasan sculptures, it is a masterpiece. It is now in a private collection in New York, sold by its owners to a Balinese antiques dealer. The sculpted woman was accompanied by her husband, Raja Tambe Boang Manalu; the latter’s head was also found on the ground, and was then set up against the torso, propped up by small stones. Note the

three stone receptacles for offerings in front of the man, on the right (pp. 160–61). The cinerary urn, no doubt equipped with an ornate lid, has disappeared. What is interesting about the statue of boru Sinamo is, first, that the wife, like her husband, is represented astride a harnessed quadruped and not seated next to his “equestrian” statue, as in all the female portraits of the Toba of the Upper Barus who adopted the practice of cremating the bones of their ancestors. Second, though the broad-tongued quadruped is endowed with an animal maw with fleshy lips, engraved on its muzzle are human eyes (they are not placed laterally).

What we have here is a representation of Naga Padoha in the form of the buffalo-*singa*, as we

have seen him depicted with much greater clarity on other sculptures that leave no place for doubt: in those cases, the quadruped has a complete human face, with eyes, a nose and a mouth.

I strongly suspect that the *mejan* of Uruk Gantung (see map, p. 37) are those that von Rosenberg saw.¹ He was coming from Singkel, and it is possible that the easiest route for him was to travel back up the valley formed by the Lae Kumbi River. He wrote that the “horseman” he discovered was made of wood, which is very unlikely but not at all impossible. In fact, the Breda’s Museum once possessed a sculpture unique in the world: a *singa*, ridden by two wooden figures, whose Pakpak Simsim origin is beyond doubt (fig. 136). That monument



Fig. 135 The magnificent Kalasan *mejan* of boru Sinamo, wife of the chieftain of Uruk Gantung Raja Tambe Boang Manau. The hindquarters of the mount have eroded somewhat, and the head is propped up by a bamboo stalk. Although less than 150 years old, this sculpture has suffered from the torrential equatorial rains. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 1993.



Fig. 136 Unique "equestrian" sculpture in wood, certainly of Pakpak Simsim origin, previously at the Breda's Museum, destroyed in a fire during the Paris Colonial Exposition in 1931. Photo Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam.



Fig. 137 Headless figure, certainly of Pakpak Simsim origin, placed on a pedestal in the courtyard of a public building in Sidikalang, seat of the Dairi regency. abm–archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1996.

was destroyed in the fire at the Dutch pavilion devoted to the Netherlands' possessions in Southeast Asia, during the Paris Colonial Exposition of 1931. Anthony Pardede covered all of Simsim country west of Uruk Gantung, which is not far from Lae Kumbi: no one ever indicated any other *mejan* to him or said that there may have been one or several of them, now vanished, as one so often hears from the villagers.

Among the Pakpak Kepas, who settled in the *kabupaten* of Dairi around Sidikalang, it is claimed that the members of that subgroup living south of their territory also possessed *mejan*. Cited as proof is a headless horseman placed on a hideous cement pedestal, in the courtyard of what seems to have been a government building, if memory serves, hence in Sidikalang itself. I photographed it there with a zoom lens through the bars of the closed gate (fig. 137). It, however, could have been brought back from Simsim country, in the *kabupaten* of Pakpak Bharat. The

Batak are very vain regarding their prestige and show little concern for the veracity. Personally, I do not think that the Pakpak Kepas ever had stone equestrian sculptures.

The name of Guru Kelasen is, if not famous, then at least universally known. Conversely, in Sidikalang itself and in the surrounding area, no one could give me any details about his teachings. I believe they have heard of him but that he reserved his teachings for the Simsim and the Kalasan.

Even among the Pakpak Pegagan, where *mejan* do not exist, the Indian guru is not unknown. I have no statistics, but I had the impression that there were many Muslims in the region. The onion domes on mosque roofs are made of corrugated iron, no small feat (fig. 138)! Ngaran Lingga, a Pegagan now living in Medan (fig. 139a), is so strongly attached to the cult of his ancestors that he had an enormous



Fig. 138 Mosque with roof and onion domes in corrugated iron, in Pakpak Pegagan country. Strong pressure is exerted on the Batak to convert to Islam. abm—archives barbier-mueler. Photo by the author, 1996.



Figs 139a and b Ngaran Lingga, a Muslim of Pakpak Pegagan origin, lives in a suburb of Medan. He regularly makes offerings to the souls of the ancestors and commissioned a painting of his family's tomb, located in his native village, to cover the entire wall of his house. abm—archives barbier-mueler. Photos by the author, 1995.

tomb of his lineage (greatly influenced by Karo architecture) painted on the wall of his sitting room (fig. 139b). He recalls a certain Guru Pandia, who came from India to teach the Pakpak the custom of cremating the dead. He does not specify whether it was the bones after they had lost their flesh or the body that was burned, but I am certain, based on various statements, that it was the bones. It is possible, however, that the body of the deceased is now burned in one place or another. We shall see shortly that Rumang Hasogihon is precise on that subject. Ngaran adds that no "stone horseman" has ever been carved by his fellows and (news to me!) that Guru Pandia ultimately married a Toba woman from Samosir named boru Saragi. He declares that the Sembiring Pandia *m'rga* of the Karo is descended from one of her children. I do not take much stock in that information: everyone knows that the members of the Sembiring *m'rga*, who are in effect Karo, practise cremation and have the dark skin of the

Fig. 139b



Tamils; they are reputed to have immigrated to Sumatra from India. Note that, among the Karo, the Sembiring are the only ones to burn the bones of their dead, after the flesh has been eaten away, and not their bodies after death. The others practise dual burial, like the Toba.



Fig. 140a Commemorative stone statue (*mejan*) of Raja Ompu Pajahit Kesugihen, fourth-generation ancestor of the informant Rumang Kesugihen, born in about 1902. The village of Si Amborgang, where this sculpture is located, is one of the first Kalasan villages from Dolok Sanggul. It is therefore not unusual that the style is more Toba than Pakpak. In fact, the sculptor is said to have been a Toba *datu panggana* (sculptor magician), a member of the Sihotang clan, from whom the Kesugihen-Hasogihon are descended. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1995.

The teachings of Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan

Let us return to Rumang Hasogihon's statements, which have been corroborated by other Kalasan and Simsim. According to Rumang, Guru Kalasan prescribed:

—burying the dead, then unearthing their bones and preserving them in order to burn them when those of a certain number of important deceased persons could be placed on a pyre and a celebration held. He does not give any name for the celebration. The souls of the ancestors follow the same path as the Toba *begu*; Guru Kalasan apparently did not modify the beliefs of the *ugamo perbegu*, except to

recommend cremation in place of the depositing of the bones in a receptacle.

—carving a *mejan*, a stone portrait of the distinguished deceased, mounted on a horse if he was a courageous warrior and on an elephant [*sic*] if he became rich in the commerce of rice or in another manner. It is possible that, even at that time, the *singa* was represented with a tongue so enormous (see certain reproductions in this volume) that Guru Kalasan mistook it for an elephant, and that the Kalasan, loath to appear pagan in his eyes, did not inform him of the true nature of the *singa*. They are very aware of it, however, since it was elderly men among their people who pointed out to us the *pandingdingan*



Fig. 140b This photo was taken by Helder Da Silva in 2011. Many restorations in cement are apparent. abm—archives barbier-mueller.



Fig. 141 Sketch by the author reconstituting the cinerary urn accompanying the first of the *mejan* of Kuta Pananggalan, from the photos of debris taken by Jana Ansermet in 1980. abm—archives barbier-mueller.

ending in *singa* heads on the façades of Toba houses, indicating they were representations of the great cosmic serpent, Naga Padoha, even though they themselves have never possessed such houses. Some did exist very close to their home in Dolok Sanggul, until about 1960.

—placing the ashes of the dead man, or men, in a stone urn in front of the monolithic sculptures. In Kuta Pananggalan, near Salak in Simsip country, the remains of an urn are visible (see pp. 80–81) alongside two harnessed *singa*, each bearing the deceased couple (a unique case), accompanied by a *singa* bearing only the wife of a chieftain of the Bancin *mërga*. These monuments were also sold in 2011.

I have reconstituted the form of that urn and, above all, of its broken lid, with the help of old documents and of the bird's head on the urn accompanying the *mejan* of Huta Poriah near Sibolga. The lid took the form of a fairly abstract bird with a very clean silhouette, no doubt a calao (rufous hornbill) (fig. 141).

There is no reason for the Indian guru Kalasan to have been familiar with the *singa*, avatar of Naga Padoha, the great cosmic buffalo-serpent that supports the Middle World in local mythology. We may be indebted to the initiative of the Kalasan, recalling the *ugamo perbegu* of the Toba—from whom they are descended—for the stone mounts representing, in an altogether self-evident manner, a *singa* in the form of a quadruped. Among the Toba who practise cremation, its face could be exactly the same as the *singa* appearing on either side of the façade of the most imposing Toba houses. The sole case of this, to my knowledge, is the *mejan* of Huta Si Rao, a Toba village not far from Barus; that monument alone displays a monster with the *gaja dompak* head of the Toba *ruma adat*² (see fig. 166). By contrast, the quadruped could have a “double face”, of both man and buffalo (see fig. 70), or could have nothing in common with the *singa ni ruma* except the large “fish mouth” outlined by thick lips, from which a long broad tongue sticks out, sometimes slightly undulating, at other times coiling into a spiral (fig. 77b).

A few Hasogihon sought absolutely to convince me that the religions they practise today, and which they call *agama Si Singamangaraja* and *agama Si Raja Batak*, were founded by Guru Kalasan. Yet another manipulation of the facts! That is impossible, since the sage from India lived

four hundred years before Si Singamangaraja. In reality, the Kalasan and their immediate Toba neighbours are all Christians today. And yet they address the powerful souls of the ancestors, *sumangot* (they never mentioned *sombaon*), when they have a serious problem, through the intermediary of Si Singamangaraja, a prestigious magician to whom legend attributes unheard-of feats.

Descendants of Toba immigrants living on the plain around Parlilitan, those who adopted the rules taught by Mpu Pandia Kalasan, forged an identity for themselves under the name of their Indian preacher.³ They preferred to attach themselves to the Pakpak Simsim rather than to the Toba from whom they were descended, because they share with that people the precepts of the Indian guru. It would also be interesting to know whether they followed the protocol for forming a new Toba *marga* in creating their Kalasan *marga*. Surely not! It is difficult to imagine a Toba *sombaon* informing his Pakpak descendants that they must change their *adat*. As for cremation, which is so contrary to Toba tradition, we shall soon see which Toba adopted it, along with the execution of stone statues placed near the cinerary urns of the deceased.

It is easy to explain why the *mejan* of the Tumanggor are veritable ruins: they are probably four hundred years old, having been created as a sign of respect upon Guru Kalasan's arrival. There must have been periods when they were protected; otherwise, nothing at all would remain of them.

Shortly after I wrote these lines, I received a message from Anthony Pardede in May 2011:

he had returned to Kuta Pananggalan, where the two *mejan* bearing two human figures each and the one with only a single rider had vanished—sold, stolen, sequestered by the police. The explanations of the members of the Bancin *marga*, owners of the monuments, are muddled. It is heartbreaking. Let's hope that they have been sold and could have found a shelter, preferably in an Indonesian or Asian museum. There is now one worthy of the name in Singapore.

Guru Kalasan's lack of influence on the *perbegu* religion

A first proof that Guru Kalasan exerted no influence on the *perbegu* religion is provided by the fact that nearly all the Kalasan, like their immediate Toba neighbours, though officially Protestant Christians, are the followers of one of the two sects already mentioned: the *agama Si Singamangaraja* or the *agama Si Raja Batak*. Both sects consider the last Si Singamangaraja (d. 1907), hero of the resistance against the Dutch, to be the "prophet" (*nabi ni debata*), the "teacher" of the ancestral religion (*malim ni debata*), or even the "son of god" (*anak ni debata*). In that respect, the two sects closely resemble the *malim* church, which is very important in the "native land". God is still Mula Jadi na Bolon, the supreme god of the traditional religion.

Of this we are certain: Guru Kalasan did not forbid the magicians from continuing to heal their fellows or to practise divination. He simply changed the way of honouring the dead, a fundamental preoccupation for all the Batak. If he had wanted to convert his hosts to Shaivism, for example, he would not have displayed such laxity. I do not think that Guru Kalasan was responsible

for the few Indian elements—for example, the representation of a terrifying protective spirit like the *kala*, linked to Death in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka (figs 160b–c)—observable in only one Toba sculpture. These are rather the result of an older influence, that of Tamil merchant colonies, which we know occupied Barus and the surrounding area half a century earlier. It is clearly to them that we are indebted for the introduction of about two hundred Sanskrit words into the Toba vocabulary, of which (according to Parkin) only thirty have religious meanings. These differ from the meanings given in India to the same names or words, beginning with *singa*, which designates a "lion" in India and which among the Toba became a hybrid mythical animal, half dragon and half buffalo, the avatar or attribute animal of Naga Padoha.

Notes

1. Rosenberg 1878, p. 59, 61.

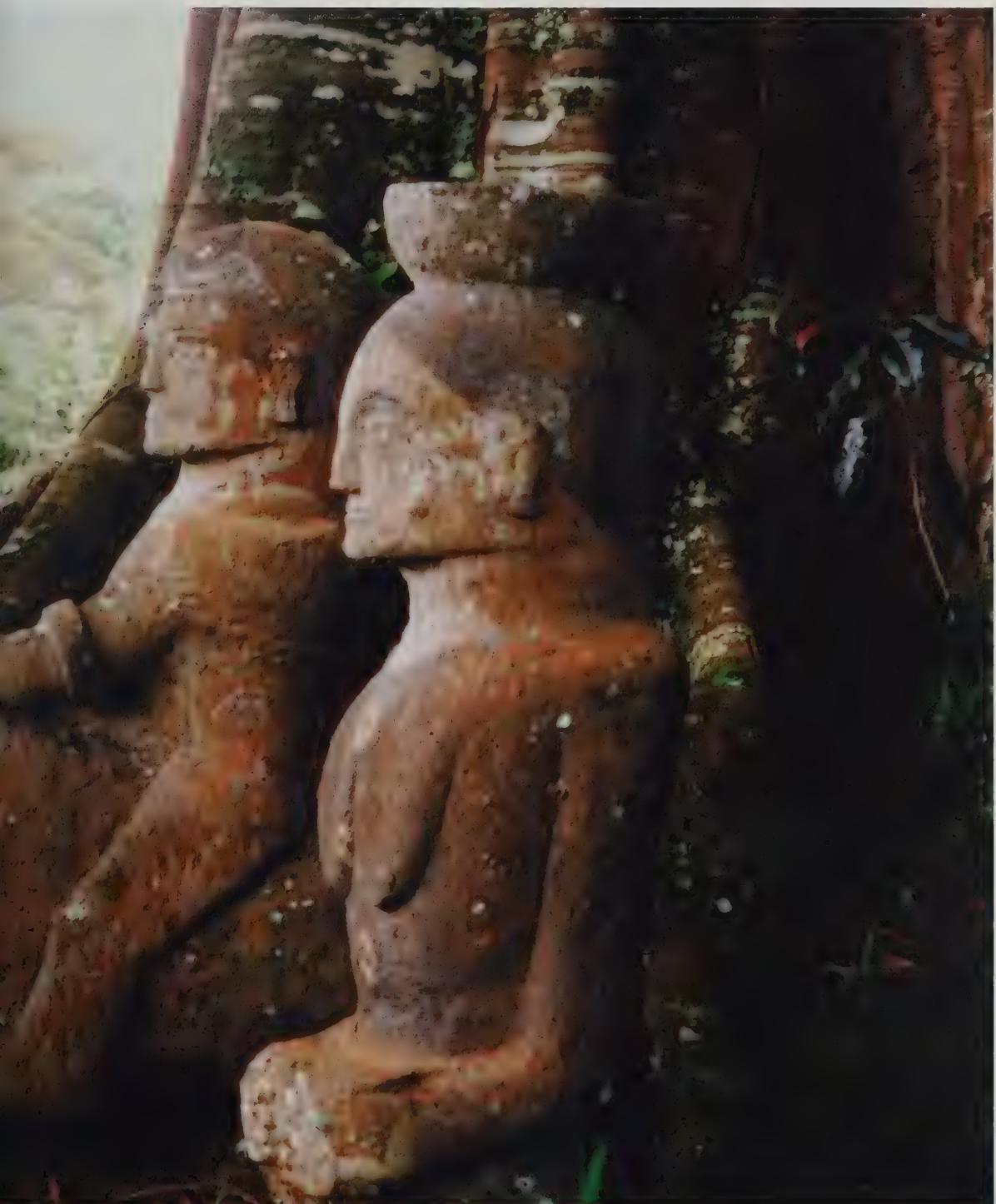
2. Traditional houses.

3. I concede that the term "preacher" is hardly appropriate. The role played by Guru Kalasan is rather special: he did not attempt to turn the descendants of Toba émigrés destined to become his disciples away from their religious beliefs. They seem, however, to have been very open to adopting a new cult, as they proved at the beginning of the twentieth century, when they adopted the practice of addressing the souls of their ancestors and their ancient gods through the intermediary of Si Singamangaraja's soul (that is also the case in the other syncretic religion, called *agama Si Raja Batak*). In short, his role was limited to calling for the cremation of the bones and the replacement of the *parholian* (sarcophagus or stone urn) with statues, "equestrian" for the man, simply seated for the woman. The Bancin clan that settled in Huta Pananggalan interpreted that order in its own way, placing the husband and his wife on the same mount.

The author in front of the effigy of Ompu Toga Natorop Silaban, Toba founder of Huta Sitonggitonggi, and his wife Issabela boru Purba, near Dolok Sanggul. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Jana Ansermet, 1996.



Chapter IX Influence of the Kalasan on their Toba neighbours



INFLUENCE OF THE KALASAN ON THEIR TOBA NEIGHBOURS

The plain south of the road between Dolok Sanggul and Si Borongborong, extending to the first rocky foothills of the Barisan Mountains, displays a mix of two funerary traditions: one belonging to the Toba tradition, apparent in the large sarcophagus of Aek Godang (fig. 66), and the other stemming from adherence to Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan's instructions, confirmed by the presence of "horsemen" very close to Dolok Sanggul in two Toba villages, Huta Sitonggitonggi and, a kilometre away, in Huta Pea Raso, both dominated by the Silaban *marga*.

The mejan of the Silaban marga

The *marga raja* of both villages are Silaban. Slight differences surface in the genealogies provided by individuals (two or three per village) in their forties, and in their sixties. For Huta Sitonggitonggi, the principal informant is Huta Silaban, forty-five years old, questioned on 3 and 4 April 1996. He modified slightly what other people had indicated to me six years earlier, when I passed through his village. Huta Silaban told me that the name of the ancestor common to the Silaban residents of the two villages was Raja Ompu Nainggal Silaban (that is, Raja "Grandfather of Nainggal"), not Ompu Raja Nainggal. The eldest son of this individual (see the genealogy below) was Raja Ama Nainggal Silaban (Raja "Father of Nainggal"). He must have had an eldest son, not listed in the genealogy, whose first name was Nainggal: Raja Ompu, it is to be understood, changed

the name given him at birth (in an act called *mangoarhon*, *goar* meaning "name") when his grandson was born, to become "grandfather (*ompu*) of Nainggal"; his eldest son became "father (*ama*) of Nainggal". In both cases, that is simplifying things, since the names were corrupted over time: they ought to be "Ompu *ni* Nainggal", that is, "grandfather of Nainggal" and "Ama *ni* Nainggal".

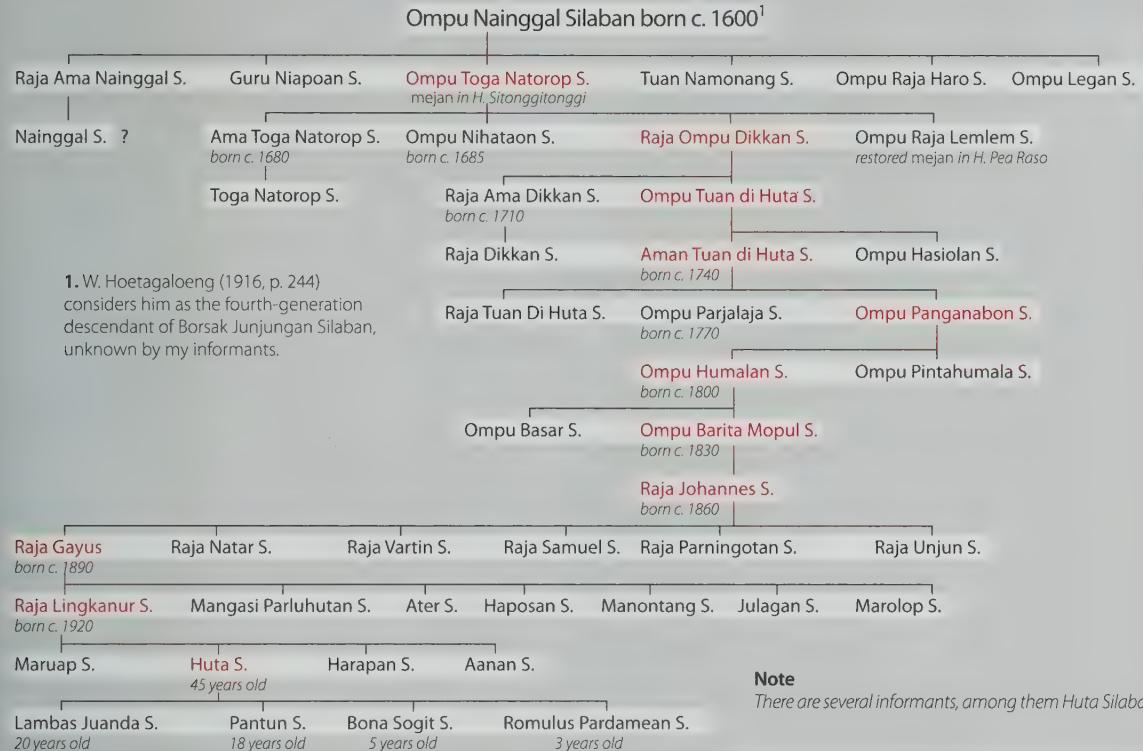
When he was a youngster, this Ompu (*ni*) Nainggal lived in Parmonangan¹ and possessed a magic serpent, *ulok sibaganding*. The term is a pleonasm, as if one were to say "adder serpent", since the word *ulok* designates serpents in general, and *baganding*, or *sibaganding*, a well-defined species of spotted reptile, very venomous. That animal, according to another informant, Manimbul Silaban (sixty-five years old in 1996), provided his owner with enormous harvests. The sister of Ompu (*ni*) Nainggal—who was not a grandfather at that time and thus bore an unknown "birth name"—and her husband, Torang Sinagabariang, coveted the miraculous serpent. One of the sons of Ompu (*ni*) Nainggal, called Guru Niapoan, seized hold of the reptile and gave it to his aunt and her husband. Then all three fled to Pakkat.

Huta Sitonggitonggi's genealogy of the Silaban lineage

In Parmonangan, the rice fields and other farmlands became infertile. All the other sons of Ompu (*ni*) Nainggal emigrated to various regions in Toba country.

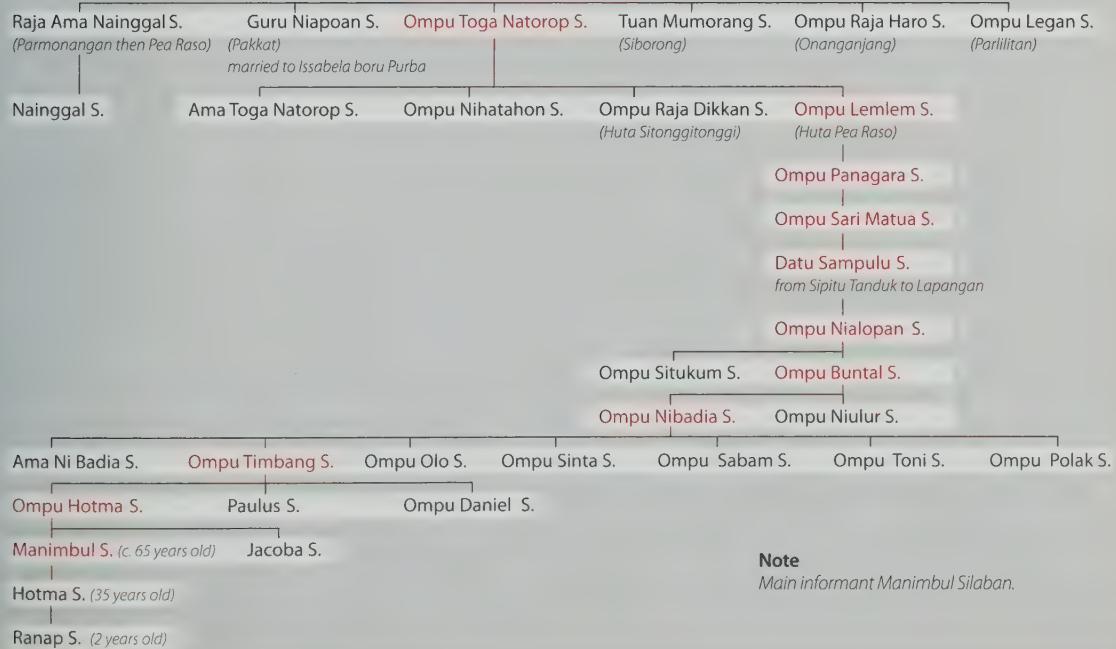
For the moment, the only one who interests us is Ompu Toga Natorop, born in the mid-seventeenth century, according to the

Genealogy of the Silaban *marga* – Descendants of Ompu Raja Dikkan S.



Genealogy of the Silaban – Descendants of Raja Ompu Lemlem S.

Ompu Nainggal Silaban



calculations made in collaboration with half a dozen elders and younger people in the village. He first founded the village of Sitonggitonggi, now on the main road between Dolok Sanggul and Si Borongborong, 7 kilometres from Dolok Sanggul. Then he founded Pea Raso, 1 kilometre from the first village. He had children with his wife, Issabela boru Purba Pargodung,² including Ompu Raja Dikkan, who may have been born in about 1680. That date, confidently tossed out by one of those participating in the reconstruction of the genealogy, is purely hypothetical, based on the number of generations separating Dikkan from the informants.³

Another son of Ompu Toga Natorop was called Ompu Raja Lemlem. He is reputed to have been born five years after Dikkan. (This is one of only two times in nearly thirty years that, in a village, I was provided with dates. I recorded them, but without believing too much in their accuracy.)

Ompu Raja Dikkan succeeded his father as raja of Huta Sitonggitonggi, while his brother Ompu Raja Lemlem ruled Huta Pea Raso. Lemlem had married Maryia Bulan boru Pakpahan. He left behind a reputation as a very experienced magician, though his name is not preceded by the epithet *datu* or "guru". His descendants declare that he journeyed with the aim of perfecting that talent, particularly to Muara⁴ and, in fact, among the Kalasan. For the first time (and that is why I speak of these Silaban, who might seem far removed from my subject), I was told that the Kalasan had competent *datu*, which presupposes that they possessed all the requisite equipment, probably *naga morsarang*, *guriguri* or *perminakan* recipients with carved



Fig. 142 The two Toba *mejan* of Huta Sitonggitonggi: Ompu Toga Natorop Silaban, mounted on a true horse, and his wife Issabela boru Purba Pargodung. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1990.

stoppers. Nothing has remained of it, unless it is located in the storerooms of a museum and labelled simply "Batak".

The Kalasan themselves make no mention of this when they evoke their ancestors. They do not praise the competence of one *datu* or another, unlike the Toba, for whom that is an extremely important matter. Only in the area of producing *mejan* do they lay claim to their creations, sometimes recalling the name of the *datu panggana* (but never that of his *marga*) as well as that of the ancestor for whom the tomb was carved.



Fig. 143 The two *mejan* of Huta Pea Raso, 1 km from Huta Sitonggitonggi on the road between Dolok Sanggu and Si Borongborong. They are the effigies of Ompu Raja Lemlem Silaban and his wife Maryia Bulan boru Pakpahan. Ompu Lemlem is reputed to have carved these two statutes himself; along with those of his father and mother, which is impossible. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1990.

In Huta Sitonggitonggi, Ompu Lemlem, the *datu panggana*, carved (I was told) the effigy of his father, Toga Natorop (fig. 142), and next to him, his mother, Issabela boru Purba, seated with her hands hugging her knees. As it happens, both statues were once located at the top of a mound of earth reinforced with stones at the base, at a time when there were traditional Toba houses in the village. Then Ompu Lemlem portrayed himself riding a horse like his father, accompanied by his wife (sitting), and installed these sculptures in his own village of Huta Pea Raso, where they still stand (fig. 143). I note in passing that the

Kalasan *mejan* closest to the Toba, the one in Huta Amborgang, near Parlilitan, also shows a man on a true harnessed horse.

A first remark is required: Toga Natorop is shown with his legs stretching almost to the horse's neck, whereas Ompu Lemlem represented himself in a manner consistent with Kalasan tradition, his legs tucked under on the mount's flanks. His wife, like that of his mother in Huta Sitonggitonggi, bears a dish on her head, as is often seen on the heads of statues of Toba women.⁵ It is a *paranggiran*, a bowl filled with liquid that the officiant uses during a magico-religious ceremony to purify his



Figs 144a and b The shot in fig. 144a shows the *mejan* of Ompu Raja Lemlem Silaban and of his wife (see the previous figure), restored with cement and repainted. A meticulous examination has revealed that parts of the two statues (indicated with hatching by the author, fig. 144b) are made of cement, which replaced the missing stone. In other words, little remains of the original works. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Polaroid by the author, 1996.

hands and to sprinkle the site of the ritual. The liquid is simply water, with lemon juice (*unte*) added; if curcuma and a sort of pepper basil (?) were included, then the purifying mixture would be called *untepangir*, or so I was told by a resident of the Gulf of Muara.⁶

It is fairly clear from the photograph of the two statues of Huta Pea Raso that there is something bizarre about them, and not only because of the recent paint brushed over them to “beautify” them. Among the Toba, many old sculptures representing men (or *singa* with human faces) are endowed with magnificent black moustaches, no doubt sported by the colonial officials and European missionaries, and which a Batak would have trouble growing on his face, since Mongoloids do not have the thick, invasive facial hair with which we are afflicted.

My careful examination of these two sculptures in Huta Pea Raso revealed the extent of the disaster: I would say that at least 70 per cent is reconstruction with painted cement (figs 144a–b). What remains of the stone does not suggest that Ompu Lemlem was an Indonesian Michelangelo. Above all, it seems to me very doubtful, even impossible, that he is the one who did the effigies of his father and mother in Huta Sitonggitonggi, as local tradition would have it.

The Huta Sitonggitonggi couple,⁷ without visible repairs, is decently crafted, but for me it evokes a less stiff version of the pair of Siregar ancestors in Huta na Godang, near Muara, on the southern shore of Lake Toba, constructed in the twentieth century (fig. 146b). The *mejan* of the Silaban are supposedly three hundred years old, more or less, since the informant Manimbul Silaban is separated

from Ompu Lemlem by ten generations. But that date is impossible. The style, the overly good state of preservation, and the rigidity of the two effigies of Ompu Toga Natorop Silaban and his wife lead me to believe that the two sculptures formerly placed at the top of the mound were damaged beyond repair, and that about a hundred years ago, the villagers hired a not-too-gifted *datu panggana*, probably Toba rather than Pakpak, to provide themselves with a brand-new pair of ancestors in stone, a prized measure of social status for the village. More recently, someone entirely restored—in a manner reeking of ignorance—the Huta Pea Raso couple, which has been further retouched and repainted since.

Fig. 145 It seems that this horseman of Raja Ompu Lobi Sumurung, accompanied by his wife, in Lumban Turuan, has disappeared. It probably dated to the late nineteenth century. Photo F. M. Schnitger.

The *marhoda gaja* (stone "horsemen") from south of Lake Toba

South of Lake Toba lie some very interesting villages: in the final quarter of the last century, they had preserved the stone fetishes, *pangulubalang*, protecting every hamlet. I found several of these *pangulubalang* in a thick wood, half engulfed in a large tree root.⁸ These are barely roughed-out human figures, not having benefited from the attentions of a skilful *datu panggana*.⁹

In the principal village of the district of Muara, Huta na Godang (that is, "The Big Village"), on a square more spacious than in a traditional village





Figs 146a, b and c Was there any limit to the displays of pride by the residents of Huta na Godang, very close to Muara on the southern shore of Lake Toba? We are lucky to have a photo (fig. 146a) from the early twentieth century showing the statues of Raja Pamoto Siregar and his wife, barely roughed out. Photo Petrus Voorhoeve, 1939. In 1980, the author photographed the finished and fully painted couple (fig. 146b). In 2011 (fig. 146c), an exhibition hall, open to the four winds but equipped with a ticket booth, had been constructed, and the statues were freshly repainted. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva.

(consider the dilapidated houses with corrugated-iron roofs in the background), stand two statues: the founder of the built-up area, Raja Pamoto Siregar, and his wife. What is unusual is that the works were completed in two phases. First, blocks of stone were transported and roughed out, until a man on horseback and a seated woman appeared (fig. 146a). Then, after a break of unknown duration, they were completed in a very naturalistic style (figs 146b–c) that requires no commentary.

Petrus Voorhoeve, whom I showed both the photo from the archives of the Royal Tropical Institute of Amsterdam and my own photo, said that the second phase was completed in 1939. The only task remaining was to paint the statues.

Although the couple, male and female, is there, and despite the incoherent information coming from the village's residents, the recent date of the installation (first half of the twentieth century) and the absence of any cinerary urn suggest that these are prestige statues and not *mejan*¹⁰ created after the bodies of the raja and his wife were cremated. The statue of the man is therefore merely a *marhoda gaja*.

I think Voorhoeve would have been very amused had he been able to see what the couple looked like in March 2011, under a roof supported by six pink cement pillars, with admission charged to visit the monuments (which, however, are easy to see from outside) (fig. 146c). Another



Fig. 146b



Fig. 146c



Fig. 147 A number of the stoppers to the small receptacles for magical substances (*guriguri*) adopt the form of a *datu* mounted on a *singa* (here, the tongue of the mythical animal resembles a beard). This sculpture is typically Karo, but the theme is exploited by all the groups. H. 14 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

prestigious *marhoda gaja* is the “horseman” of Raja Ompu Lobi Sumurung in Lumban Turuan, accompanied by his wife (fig. 145), which my collaborator Anthony Pardede—with and without me—long searched for in vain. It may have been destroyed.

Frederic Martin Schnitger¹¹ seems to count these works, along with the Muara couple, among the monuments of Pakpak influence.

Is that not forgetting all the small wooden effigies of human figures riding *singa*, so numerous in the art of the Toba and Karo? The stoppers for



Fig. 148 Horsemen, with the angular forms beloved of the Karo, often serve as tops for the smallest of the magic wands (*tungkot malekat*, or, in Toba, *tungkot malehat*). Here, the mount resembles a true horse. H. 20 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

magic potion receptacles (fig. 147), the cane tops *tungkot malehat* (fig. 148), are plentiful. Why would a raja not have come up with the idea of having his effigy produced as a stone monument of large dimensions? We know from a reliable source that some powerful individuals, far-sighted and with no confidence in the zeal of their descendants, had large blocks of stone brought to their houses in the centre of the village, to have sarcophagi made of them.¹²

Given the extreme mobility of the Toba, who are rabid travellers, and while awaiting archaeological

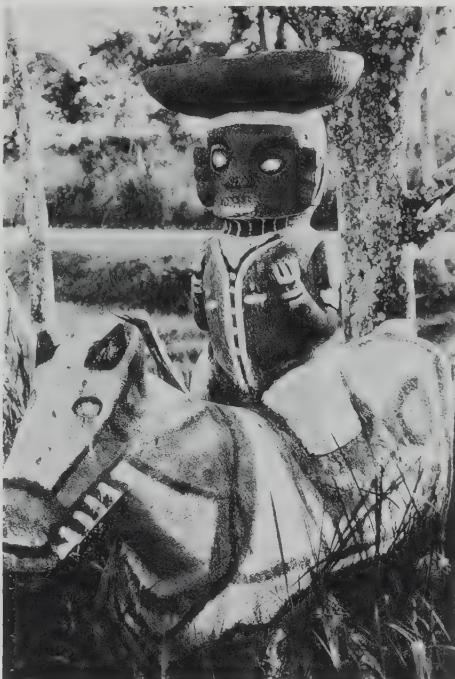
excavations, I am nevertheless inclined to agree with Schnitger that they imitated what they had seen, either in Huta Sitonggitonggi or among the Kalasan. But in their case, they were merely in search of prestige.

I shall not revisit the male equestrian statue of Raja Pangalitan Nababan, photographed by Bartlett in 1918 or 1927 in Jonggi ni Huta, a short distance from Si Borongborong, on the main road leading to Tarutung (fig. 149a). It is also of late date and prestigious. It could be funerary, or it may have been realized on the order of Raja Pangalitan, in the early twentieth century.

The different names for the stone "horsemen"

In the 1920s, Bartlett¹³ saw a very crude carved horseman, mounted on a horse,¹⁴ in Jonggi ni Huta, a short distance from Si Borongborong, hence in the middle of what was originally Toba territory. It was the effigy of Raja Pangalitan Nababan (fig. 149a), repainted with imported industrial paints, which were beginning to make an appearance at the time, along with the use of cement. The Toba of today make immoderate use of both, constructing enormous, extravagant tombs.

The monument Bartlett saw has been moved. I found it by chance in the same region, in Pea Lange, on the main road between Tarutung and Si Borongborong, 4 kilometres from the latter town, repainted and perched atop a cement monument in which the bones of other members of the Nababan *marga* had been deposited. Their names are inscribed on the pedestal (fig. 149b).



Figs 149a and b This imposing Toba horseman in stone was photographed by H. H. Bartlett in the 1920s, in the village of Jonggi ni Huta, between Si Borongborong and Tarutung (fig. 149a). It is now located at the top of a cement monument (fig. 149b), accompanied by the remains of several other notable members of the Nababan *marga* in Pea Lange, a village 4 km from Si Borongborong, on the road to Tarutung.
abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1996.



Fig. 149b

Bartlett found out that the vogue for stone "horsemen" originated among the Pakpak. I do not know exactly how he came upon this knowledge, since he does not seem to have travelled very far from Simalungun, where he exercised his talents as a botanist. He gives these sculptures the name *hoda-hoda bakkuwang*.

Harry Parkin, made confident by the accuracy of the information habitually provided by Bartlett, adopted the term for his 1978 book on the influence of India on Batak culture,¹⁵ as did, subsequently, Achim Sibeth, a German ethnologist who has to his credit the largest number of works on the Batak to be written in the last few decades. Finally, just recently, the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore has used the variant *hoda-hoda banghuan*, now applied to small wooden representations of "horsemen" of Karo origin. The museum ought to have remembered that such a designation would be impossible among the Pakpak and Karo, where a horse is called *kuda* and not *hoda*, as in Toba.

To return to Bartlett's term *hoda-hoda bakkuwang*: Anthony Pardede and I (he more than I) have been trying for more than thirty years to find out where it comes from, since Bartlett was the soul of integrity and must have repeated what he was told. Unfortunately, the term is unknown to all the Toba in the regions that possessed figures mounted on stone horses, to the members of the Nababan *marga*, to which the individual in the statue photographed by Bartlett belonged, and also to the neighbouring clans in Si Borongborong or further away, south-west of the lake, to Toba near Dolok Sanggul. The word is equally unfamiliar to the Kalasan (who, like the Toba, call the horse *hoda*). Among the other

Pakpak, where a horse is called *kuda*, and where *kuda-kuda* means "like a horse", we were met with the same ignorance, except about the term *bakkuwang*. In Dairi, that word designates a mat made of pandanus leaves. It has nothing to do with a sculpture, an "equestrian" effigy, or even indirectly, with the *singa*.

In a few Toba, Pakpak Kalasan, and Pakpak Simsim villages possessing statues of human figures mounted on stone horses, which Anthony or I were led to visit for our investigations, the exact term applied to them is *marhoda gaja* among the Toba and Kalasan, and *merkudah gaja* among the Pakpak Simsim. *Mejan*, a term in common use, has a religious connotation, according to some Simsim informants. If we are to believe the Toba and Kalasan elders, who are unanimous on this point, the term *mejan* has nothing to do with the same word in Toba, which designates a funerary marionette,¹⁶ *mejan* or *bejan* that performs in the same way as the *sigalegale* mannequin at the funeral of a childless man.

Among the Toba of the Upper Barus and of the Lower Barus, all "ancestral" stone sculptures are therefore called *mejan*. They may be rajas, mounted on *singa* or horses or true elephants (and not *singa* afflicted with tongues big as trunks); or they may be statues of the royal wives, sitting on a seat placed on a platform (it is rare) flush with the stone block that forms the pedestal, their hands around their knees; others are kneeling.

The taste for such monuments may have been imported from India by the famous guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan, who converted the Kalasan to the practice of burning the bones of their

dead and of erecting "equestrian" statues. I made inquiries with our correspondent Dr Usha Ramamrutham Bala Krishnan, a graduate of Columbia University, who published our collection of ritual Indian gold jewellery. *Mejan* means nothing in Tamil Nadu, or in India. It is thus more likely that, through the intermediary of their Toba relations, the Kalasan hijacked the name of the anthropomorphic marionette that Voorhoeve photographed in action and applied it to their prestigious and ancestral human figures.

I shall conclude with this obvious fact: assuming that Bartlett accurately recorded that designation for a stone "horseman", *hoda-hoda bakkwang* (his scholarly rigour prohibits me from suspecting he was in error), and conceding that the name was in use in a tiny Toba region unknown to us,¹⁷ it could not in any case have been applied to Pakpak Simsim or Karo equestrian effigies made of stone or wood, since among those groups, the horse is called *kuda* and not *hoda*.

Notes

1. That name, which means "gain, what has been earned", from *monang*, "to make a profit", is that of a small village (now a *lobu*), the cradle of the Purbatua lineage of the Situmorang, near Lontung, on the eastern shore of Samosir. I know of no other village so named. Anthony Pardeede was unable to locate the Silaban village in question.
2. Although the Purba are a well-known *marga*, Hoetagaloeng does not mention a *marga* descending from it and called Pargodung. Perhaps it was only a lineage (*saompu*) that had not yet separated from the Purba but that sought to distinguish itself because its members were very numerous.
3. Raja Pane Sitorus, one of my very good informants in Uluan in 1977–78, who became a friend, had fathered a child at the age of seventy. Such "feats" skew calculations based on the average of thirty years attributed to each *sundut* (generation).
4. In the hinterland of the Gulf of Muara, at the very southern tip of Lake Toba, the villages were protected by small stone *pangulubalang*, which were rather poorly roughed out. I photographed them and reproduced them in *Tobaland* (1983).
5. The "horseman" that Bartlett called *hoda-hoda bakkwang*, at present perched on an enormous *semen* near Si Borongborong (see fig. 149b), bears on its head what appears to be an enormous beret, but which is in reality a dish serving as a *paranggiran*. The woman seated at the back of the sarcophagus of Tomok wears one as a headdress, as is often observed elsewhere. See my photos published in *Messages in Stone* (1999).
6. Surveys carried out in 1977, and in spring and in fall 1980.
7. The horseman and his wife are both 1.4 metres long and 1 metre tall.
8. See Barbier-Mueller 1983, figs 163–66.
9. Ibid. pp. 155–58.
10. I repeat that, in the "native land"—Lake Toba, the Samosir Peninsula, and the immediate environs—the word *mejan* designated a marionette that performed at the funeral of a man who had died childless. It is said that in the region of Balige (very close to Muara), the *mejan* did not have a head carved of wood but rather sported the skull of the deceased, covered with clay and resin.
11. Schnitger 1941–42, p. 229.
12. Few of these sarcophagi remain on the village square. The colonial authority, anxious to reduce the prestige of the ruling lineages, had them moved outside the built-up area.
13. Bartlett 1934, pl. XXIII
14. That statue, like others south of Lake Toba, has nothing to do with the dead destined for cremation. These were prestige monuments, showing the ancestor as a horseman, hence a wealthy figure of high rank. In that case, only the designation *marhoda gaja* applies.
15. Parkin 1978, p. 75. Parkin's thesis in theology (he subsequently taught at the HKBP Nommensen University in Pematang Siantar, Simalungun) is a strange work. Everything about Sanskrit is clearly very familiar to him, and he seems to know nothing about the Batak he discusses. He tells us: "The Sembiring *marga* of the Karo Batak is unique amongst all the Batak tribes in that they cremate their dead" (p. 91). He therefore never went among the Pakpak Simsim, who burn not the body but the bones of the deceased, like the Kalasan and a large number of Toba from the Upper and Lower Barus. Parkin repeats what he read in Bartlett: "The graves of some chieftains take the form of a tumulus on which a carved figure on horseback is erected" (p. 75). He thinks that the "horse" is linked to the individual's rank: "One thing is certain; the horse was associated with kingship." But

Fig. 150 Family of the *datu* Nahum Nainggolan in Huta Sipang.
abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

in reality, the prestigious horse was substituted at a late date for a "buffalo-serpent", Naga Padoha, the enemy of man but the one responsible for transporting the souls of the dead (*begu* or *sumangot*), or perhaps only the most elevated souls (*sombaon*) in the hierarchy of the Hereafter, to the place where they would dwell evermore. And at this point, Parkin, an inattentive reader of Vergouwen, makes a huge mistake: he writes, "the *tondi* becomes *begu*", whereas it is universally recognized that the *tondi* returns to the Upper World, and the *begu*, which is "the soul of the deceased" (*tondi ni na mate*), then appears. Parkin helpfully provides a list of two hundred Sanskrit words that entered the Batak vocabulary in a more or less deformed state. And he ascertains or senses that the adoption of the word was not accompanied by the adoption of a belief, of the cult of an Indian deity. The Toba call all their zodiac signs by their Sanskrit names. Nevertheless, the Toba lunar calendar (*porhalaan*, from *hala*, scorpion) was a Batak invention, which indicated the inauspicious days (those marked by the scorpion's tail). Amid a host of errors attributable to Parkin's lack of knowledge of Batak beliefs (and especially to the fact that his entire book is based on the fanciful theories of Tobing), there are signs of great integrity. He says: "No Indian-Buddhist is discernible in the *tondi* cult" (p. 186) and refuses to link the three gods of the Upper World (Batara Guru, Soripada and Mangalabulan) to the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (contrary to Warneck and Tobing), while attempting to attribute its origin to the Saivite trinity (Mahesvaramurti), reinterpreted. He thinks that the *singa ni ruma*'s appearance may have been borrowed from representations of the *makara* monsters found in the southern part of Batak country, in Padang Lawas (Padang Bolak), where ruins of a Javanese Hindu temple have been found. I advanced that hypothesis in *Tobaland* (1983, see figs 89 and 89bis) and, since then, have come face to face with such a large number of buffalo-serpents evoking Naga Padoha, all so different from one another, that I wonder whether the *singa ni ruma* themselves could have been inspired by the *makara*, even as they clearly took on different functions.

16. Voorhoeve 1940, pp. 339–56.

17. Because Bartlett had seen "his" horseman very near Si Borongborong, where it is still located, my collaborator Anthony Pardede went to many villages between Si Borongborong and Tarutung. Nowhere was the expression familiar. And the word *bakkuwang* did not have the meaning of "pandanus-leaf mat" provided by the Pakpak of Dairi.





Group of Toba ancestral statues, three horsemen and two women, along with "tomb markers", whose form was borrowed from Islam. This group is preserved in front of the house of the chieftain of Huta na Godang, who brought it back from the ancestral village of Huta Sugasuga, to prevent its being destroyed or going missing. Coastal region near Barus. Pasaribu marga. abrn—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.



Chapter X The Toba statues of the Upper and Lower Barus



THE TOBA STATUES OF THE UPPER AND LOWER BARUS

This time, we are among the Toba, some living rather far from Kalasan country, and who have unquestionably adopted one (at least) of the rules established by Guru Kalasan, cremation of bones accompanied by the erection of stone statues (*mejan*) representing the dead, but without renouncing their Toba identity or respect for Toba customary law (*adat*).

The territory containing stone monuments that combine the Toba and Kalasan styles, though vast, is roughly limited to what is called the Upper and Lower Barus, that is, the plain between the horizontal line traced by the road between Pakkat and Dolok Sanggul to the north, then the parts of the Barisan Mountains coming after that plain, and finally the shoreline between Barus and Sibolga (see map, p. 36).

From the first, we notice that the Toba statuary from the Upper and Lower Barus¹ possesses a remarkable stylistic homogeneity, as is found nowhere else. For the men, the mount is always a *singa*, whose long coiled tongue is not as large as it is among the closest Kalasan, in Pakkat, Huta Gaman, and Huta Sahombu Pinim, for example, and does not assume the aspect of a trunk. The animal's tail is curved and comes to rest against the horseman's back, in accordance with the rule set by the Simsim and Kalasan sculptors. One of their other rules is also preserved: the legs are tucked up, knees bent, against the flank of the buffalo-*singa*. No human face is carved or engraved on the animal's muzzle. As for the human figure himself, his back is always very arched, but his face is pure Toba, with the median line beginning at the top of the forehead (more or less strongly marked), forming a ridge along the nose and sometime continuing onto the chin.²

Fig. 151



Fig. 152



Fig. 153



The great peculiarity observed in the Upper and Middle Barus is without a doubt the presence of sculptures representing chieftains' wives nude and treated realistically. I think that these do not exist among the Kalasan or Simsims, for whom the wife is also entitled to a mount, sometimes of minuscule dimensions. Among the Toba of the Upper Barus, the women are often seated, holding their knees in their hands. When they are kneeling, also a common posture, they often have their hands on their thighs. In the Lower Barus, the women hold lime (the mineral, not the fruit) and betel boxes in their hands.

In 1987, in Huta Pagar Batu, very close to Pakkat, Anthony Pardede photographed the statue of Marisi boru Situmorang, wife of Raja Jugul Simbolon, a village chieftain at a time difficult to fix (the villagers toss out contradictory dates and do not know their genealogy, which is unusual), probably in the nineteenth century (fig. 151). They know only

one thing: Marisi died young and her statue, set on a long stone sarcophagus covered with a very Toba foliated decoration, was commissioned by her husband, the raja, who was aggrieved by her loss. It is not in this case a portrait erected on the order of the descendants of an ancestor of very noble extraction. Marisi boru Situmorang's husband did not have himself represented as a "horseman", unless his funerary monument has disappeared. The arch of the back, the seated posture with hands on knees, the head with its bald pate (formerly painted) and "Greek profile", the tightly closed and prominent lips, and the sharp ridge of the chin, manifestly belong to the Toba style. Let me note in passing that the statue's head vanished between 1987 and April 1993, when Anthony Pardede again saw the sculpture (fig. 152), the neck now topped by a large oval river stone, on which were drawn, in charcoal, two round eyes, a nose and a mouth.

Fig. 154



Fig. 151 Squatting funerary statue of Marisi boru Situmorang, wife of Raja Jugul Simbolon, former chieftain of the village of Huta Pagar Batu, near Pakkat. According to Raja Jugul's descendant, it is more recent by about fifty years than the commemorative effigy of boru Barutu. abm-archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 1987.

Fig. 152 The statue of Marisi boru Situmorang in April 1993. The head of the funerary sculpture, which had a crack in its neck (see fig. 151), has disappeared, replaced by a large river rock on which a mouth, nose and eyes have been drawn. abm-archives barbier-mueller. Photo Anthony Pardede, 1993.

Fig. 153 Large female statue from the hinterland of Barus. It formed a couple with the horseman in fig. 59. The ornament ending in a spiral behind the right ear is hollow; a sacred branch was to be placed in it for religious purposes. H. 86.5 cm. Private collection. abm-archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

Fig. 154 Squatting funerary statue in stone, photographed by Petrus Voorhoeve in the hinterland of Barus, before 1939. This sculpture served to block the opening of the bone receptacle built into a long sarcophagus. The head seems to have been carved separately. The style of this piece is altogether reminiscent of the funerary statue of Marisi boru Situmorang (fig. 151) and also of the sculpture in fig. 153. Photo Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam.

By way of comparison, consider a photograph taken by Voorhoeve in the hinterland of Barus, (fig. 154) in which the woman has the same round, bald head, apparently the same profile (the shot was taken in three-quarters rear profile, so it is not perfectly legible), an identical arch to the back, and the same position of the arms, with the large *golang golang*, or bracelets (perhaps blackened in the case of Marisi boru Situmorang). She is not in a seated position, however: she is kneeling and, once again, it does seem as though she serves to stop up the opening through which the ashes were introduced into a sort of long sarcophagus, too large for that function. Could the ashes and bones have been mixed together? That supposition is not based on any evidence. The villagers say, "The greater the tomb, the greater the ancestor." That is why they sometimes construct monuments such as the

Fig. 155 On the main square of Pakkat, a cement monument dating to 1969, painted in gaudy colours, exalts the wealth of a pair of Toba nobles.

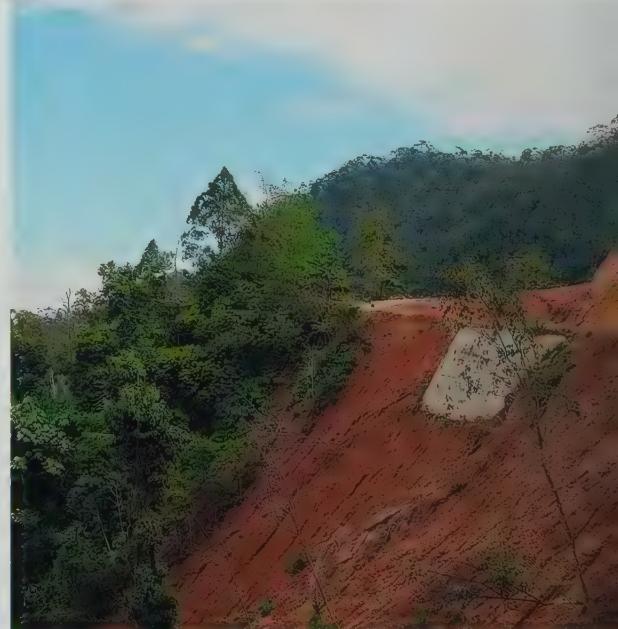
Such concrete sculptures and tombs perpetuate the old traditions among the Toba, more than among the Pakpak. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.



one located on the main square of Pakkat, which has to be seen to be believed. With each of my visits, I found it bigger and gaudier.

The portrait of Marisi boru Situmorang can be compared to the female statue reproduced fig. 153, acquired in Brussels along with her "horseman" husband (fig. 59). These statues were also reputed to come from the Upper Barus, that is, the region around Pakkat, where the Toba *datu panggana* were influenced by their Kalasan colleagues, as attested by the raja's legs, tucked up against the flanks of his bridled mount (above the elbow, the raja wears the *gading*,³ the men's bracelet). The mount has only an animal muzzle, with no human face carved on it, but it is identifiable as a *singa* with a buffalo body, because of its long, thick, coiled tongue sticking out of an outlined "fish mouth", which only the mythic animal possesses.

Figs 156, 157 and 158 In the double chain of the Barisan Mountains that forms the hinterland of Barus, the ravines are impressive, the forest is dense, and the apes numerous. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photos Helder Da Silva, 2011.



The man's face would be indistinguishable from that of his wife were it not for a curious ornament behind the woman's ear, in the form of a spiral coiled against it. The upper part is flat, projecting approximately 3 centimetres, and pierced with a vertical hole in the spiral. In addition, this woman is wearing the *golang golang*; she is seated, her hands hugging her knees, and her arms still show traces of polychromy. The base is suggestive of a stone stopper inserted into a hole made in a cinerary receptacle, for which she would serve as the "lid".

To return to the high-relief ornament placed on the right side of her head: I would have never understood its function had I not encountered, during one of my peregrinations, the very beautiful statue of Ronggur ni ari boru Barutu⁴ in Parik Sinombah, in the Lower Barus this time, 7 kilometres from the built-up area of Barus and 5 kilometres from the Indian Ocean.

The statue was made on the order of her husband, Raja Ranjo Simanjuntak, during her lifetime (see next page).

We have therefore left the Upper Barus and, by a road running alongside forests in a narrow, uninhabited valley, crossed the double chain of the Barisan Mountains⁵ forming the hinterland of Barus known as Sijamapolang (populated by the gatherers of benzoin resin, *haminjon*): impressive ravines, dense forest, and the shrill cries of apes in the part closest to the shore (figs 156–58). Having arrived at a cemetery, behind the houses lining the road, I discover, under an enormous sacred fig, the carved portrait of Ronggur ni ari (fig. 159),⁶ seated on a quadrangular block of stone adorned with the foliage seen on *ruma gorga* (traditional houses of the Toba from the "native land"). The block itself is carved in a single piece with a thinner pedestal, on which the woman's bare feet rest

Fig. 157



Fig. 158





159 Statue carved at the request of Raja Ranjo Simanjuntak for his wife Ronggur ni ari boru Barutu (village of Parik Sinombah, near Barus). In this high-quality work, the woman is represented nude with two earrings, along with rings and bracelets. She holds two boxes in her hands, one for betel leaves, the other for lime. She is placed on a seat adorned with curvilinear foliated motifs. H. 116 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.



160a Photo taken in Parik Sinombah. The statue of Ronggur ni ari boru Barutu is adorned with a cluster of leaves from a sacred plant (*silirjuhang*), placed in an orifice in her occiput. Lichen completely covers it. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.



Fig. 160d The rectangular seat on which Boru Barutu is sitting is adorned with an irregular foliated decoration reminiscent of the cosmic tree that appears as a decoration on traditional Toba houses. It is clumsily executed. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.



160b View of the back of the same sculpture. On the rear section of the pedestal, the face of the *kala*, a protective monster of Indian origin, can be discerned with some difficulty. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.



160c Parik Sinombah is 7 km from Barus, the large port that Ptolemy mentioned in the second century, from which camphor and benzoin resin were exported. The nearby villages must have benefited from that wealth and traded with India, which explains the presence of a *kala*, figure of the protective monster, on the back of the pedestal. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

(that is unusual: ordinarily, the female effigies of the Western Toba are kneeling or squatting).

In an excrescence taking the form of a lock of hair at the back of the head, adorned with a foliated motif and pierced with a hole (figs 160a–b), boru Barutu wears the leafy stalk of a sacred plant. The use of the projecting, hollow ornament of the other female statue is suddenly and unexpectedly explained.

That unique sculpture, now in the collections of the Quai Branly Museum, is not a very clear example of the Toba style. The back is less arched than that of the female statues of the Upper Barus seen above. She is nude but is neither crouching nor kneeling; rather, she sits on a rectangular seat. Her hands are not hugging her knees. In one of them she holds a rectangular box (a brass

or silver model with repoussé decoration) for betel leaves (*demban*), and a round box for lime (*kapur*) (fig. 160f). Distinguished ethnologists have often written that the "betel nut" is chewed by Toba of both sexes. In actuality, the nut is provided by a palm tree of the genus *Arecaceae*. The areca nut (*pinang*) is broken into pieces and one piece is placed inside a betel leaf along with lime, sometimes with the addition of a sort of vegetable gum (*gambir*). Once the quid is formed, it is called *napuram*. There is a bulge from such a quid in boru Barutu's cheek, rendered very realistically (fig. 160g). Below is a detail of one of the earrings worn by the stone lady (fig. 160h). No earring of that size or style (it vaguely resembles the Toba *duri-duri*) is known. There is only one false note: she is not wearing the large *golang golang*, reserved for high-ranking Toba women. Is that because of her Pakpak Simsim



Figs 160e, f, g and h Four details of the statue of boru Barutu. Left to right: the ornament on the back of the skull, where sacred leaves could be placed; the two hands holding the rectangular box for betel leaves and the round box for lime; a three-quarters profile view revealing a quid, or *hapuran* (areca nut and betel leaf) in the woman's mouth; and finally, one of the curious earrings, the model for which is unknown. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photos Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

origin? The Toba of Parik Sinombah pronounce her name "Barutu". A Simsime would say "B'rutu", and I would have to write it as "Bēruthu".

The detail, which is neither Kalasan nor Toba, confirms the statements of the villagers, namely, that the statue of boru Barutu is the work of a *datu panggana* from Barus named Pramin *na i singa na Bolon*, influenced by Indian motifs. That is evident in the monster head, with round eyes and a huge mouth spiked with teeth, which appears on the back part of the base, under the woman's buttocks. No doubt is possible: it is an Indian *kala* head, surrounded by the foliated decoration specific to the Toba, which evokes the cosmic tree, rather clumsily executed.⁷

The name of the *datu panggana* gave me a great deal of trouble, and when I published the statue for the first time in a brief article, I did not mention it, because I was inquiring about the meaning of the words *na i singa* (*na Bolon* does not pose any problem: he was a "great sculptor" from Susan Rodgers and several learned elderly men. Susan threw in the towel. Then, during a trip to Sumatra in 1995, I saw several of my

informants, two of whom told me that *na i* was the equivalent of *ni*, that is, "of", contradicting Warneck's dictionary,⁸ which says that *nai* is the contraction of *na* and *di*, meaning "that which", and does not solve my problem. But the dictionary speaks of *nai* and not *na i*. If *na i* contracts to *ni*, then everything becomes clear. As it happens, the word *singa* not only designates the monster representing Naha Padoha but also has another meaning: "effigy, image". In his dictionary, Warneck has "Form, Bild, Skizze" (form, image, sketch).⁹

The *datu ni singa*, then, is a variant of the *datu panggana*, who creates a *ganaganaan*, that is, a "carved" image (*gana*). I submitted that proposal to several informants. In Huta Liangkas, the face of one of them, Pintung Sidabutar, lit up: "It's like *datu parsinga*!" he told me. At that moment, I felt true happiness. I slipped the words *datu parsinga* into conversation during the weeks that followed and was understood by almost everyone. One single man asked me if that was a name I was giving to those who carved the *singa* on houses. Let us return to boru Barutu. Her husband, Raja

Ranjo Simanjuntak, had been born in a village, subsequently abandoned, in the region of Bonan Dolok,¹⁰ where his grandfather had himself immigrated from Si Borongborong. Raja Ranjo had imposed his authority thanks to his talents as a magician, after founding Parik Sinombah. Once he had established his reputation, he went in search of a wife—Ronggur ni ari Barutu—in a Pakpak Simsim clan (founded earlier by a Toba, probably from the Sinaga *marga*).¹¹

Here is a strong example of a displacement of the custom of cremating the bones of the dead toward the coast of the Indian Ocean (that explains the statues of Huta Poriah near Sibolga; see below). Raja Ranjo, after a thousand exertions, had arranged for the “equestrian” statue of his grandfather, Ompu Raja Sanggamulana¹² Simanjuntak, to be transported from the middle of Western Toba country to the coastal region where he had settled. This was an extraordinary feat, given the double chain of mountains that separates the starting point from the destination. The *mejan* survived in 1987 (fig. 161a) near a small house, in a little garden surrounded by a metal fence. It was completely patched up with cement, then repainted in vivid colours, to such a degree that it was difficult to make out what was original and what restored. The repairers could not have invented the long tongue sticking out of the fleshy lips of the “fish mouth”, which certain travellers have taken for an elephant trunk, but which is typical of the representations of the *singa*, avatar of the great cosmic serpent, Naga Padoha. Surprise! Between 2005 and 2011, other, local artists, no longer *datu panggana* or *parsinga*, stepped in. Raja Sanggamulana’s mount became a beautiful reddish brown, and the raja is now painted black, only his face remaining white, which gives him the appearance of an ape.



Figs 161a and b Raja Ranjo Simanjuntak did not commission the carving of his own *mejan*, only the portrait of his wife. But he had the portrait of his grandfather Ompu Raja Sanggamulana—who remained in Bonan Dolok, on the other side of the Barisan Mountains—brought to Parik Sinombah. No doubt greatly damaged, it was “restored” with cement reinforcement. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Above, photo by the author in 1987; below, photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.

Fig. 161b



The fence has been reinforced in a symbolic way (fig. 161b). Since the statue was not very old, was it while being transported over hill and dale that it was damaged? Or did the residents of Huta Poriah want to improve it? In any case, even before the most recent "gussying up", no style was recognizable under the cement.

Raja Ranjo, then, married a Pakpak Simsim woman, but he belonged to a Toba family from the Middle Barus that had adopted the practice of bone cremation. His grandfather Ompu Raja Sanggamulana already had his *mejan*. Where to place these individuals in time? Raja Ranjo and his wife, Ronggur ni ari, are the fifth-generation ancestors of the sexagenarians who represented the Simanjuntak *marga raja* in Huta Poriah between 1987 and 1995. These ancestors were born c. 1770, and the statue of Ronggur ni ari may date to 1830, or a little earlier. Raja Ranjo's grandfather was likely born in about 1600, and his *mejan* was carved hundred years later.

Note, finally, that cremation was apparently already being practised in the eighteenth century in the region of Bonan Dolok, whereas in Aek Godang, not far east of there, a stone sarcophagus, *batu gaja*, was carved as late as 1850 to hold the skull and long bones of a Toba chieftain.

It is clear that the portrait of boru Barutu produced a keen impression on the residents of the hamlets adjacent to Parik Sinombah. In one of them, named Huta Si Horbo, half a kilometre from Barus, I saw somewhat later the smaller effigy in stone (about 70 centimetres tall) of a woman known only as boru Lubis (Pabalubis, a Toba *marga*), wife of a member of the Simanjuntak *marga raja*. I was told it was carved



Fig. 162 Funerary statue of boru Lubis in Huta Si Horbo, near Parik Sinombah. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.

in the early twentieth century by a *datu panggana* inspired by the effigy of boru Barutu. Rather clumsily realized, she was seated, like her model (but her seat was more modest, undecorated); she held boxes in her hands, and she was wearing a sarong (fig. 162). Anthony Pardede told me that by about 1995 she too had disappeared. She did not surface on the Western antiquities market. There are now collectors of Batak art in Indonesia and in Singapore.

Is it necessary to repeat that, in the entire territory we have defined (in the circuit Dolok Sanggul-Tarutung-Sibolga-Barus-Pakkat-Dolok Sanggul), none of the beautiful traditional Toba houses survive, those whose construction required the cooperation of all the *marga boru* and that were built by various methods: the piers were not always planted in the ground but often placed on broad stones, allowing the buildings to withstand the frequent earthquakes.

As a result of the matrimonial relationships maintained by the Kalasan and the Toba of



Fig. 163 Row of ancestral statues (see also pp. 186–87) in Huta na Godang, not far from Barus. Their owner, Raja Bondar Pasaribu, collected them outside his house, since the old village had been abandoned. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.

Pusuk and Dolok Sanggul, the Toba knew the customs of their Kalasan and Simsims wives, the stone statues and the cremation creating a bond between them. We may wonder about the style of the many wood sculptures made by the magicians among the Kalasan and their Toba neighbours.

From Barus to Sibolga on the narrow coastal plain

Excavations would need to be done in the region surrounding Barus. In Labu Tua, a stela was found with an inscription in Tamil dating to AD 1088; it mentions a large merchant community from India based there. Barus may have accommodated fifteen hundred Indians.

Several studies have been devoted to the kingdom of Barus, whose legendary sovereign was supposedly one “Raja Utı”, a member of the Pasaribu (?) *marga*, revered by the Parmalim. Oddly, they place him at the top of a list that ends with the twelve Si Singamangarajas, at the



Fig. 164 The statue of boru Sihiti, wife of Raja Utı Pasaribu (?), is the largest and the best carved of the group appearing in the previous photo and on pp. 186–87. Note the ear with the typically Toba “foliated decoration”. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.

same time saying that they are not Raji Utı’s descendants. Let us leave that aside.

About 20 kilometres from Barus on the road to Sibolga, a valley opens on the left. Within a few kilometres, a path leads to the village of Huta na Godang, composed of huts lined up on the right side. Amidst the other huts, without any distinctive sign or ornament, is the dwelling of Raja Bondar¹³ Pasaribu, the village chieftain.

So that no one will steal from him the ancestral statues abandoned near the deserted ancestral village (Huta Sugasuga), founded by his ancestor Raja Ompu Surung Pasaribu, he has collected them in his little garden (fig. 163). And when someone wants to photograph them, he proves wary: Is that not an effort to identify them, so as to be able to make off with them? In the end, everything works out.

In reply to our questions, he says that his lineage of the Pasaribu *marga* left the Silindung Valley six generations ago, hence at most two

hundred years, because of the conditions of scarcity. He does not speak of an earthquake. The first statue in the row, crudely carved, represents Raja Ompu Surung Pasaribu, founder of Huta Sugasuga. Another clumsy sculpture is a portrait of Raja Utí: it is the last in the row. In the middle, a female statue, boru Sihiti, with rather flaccid forms, is supposedly the same age as boru Barutu (fig. 164). Her enormous ears are astonishing, displaying the Toba's predilection for spirals. As a sign of her rank, she wears the large *golang golang*. Then comes a group of three statues, two small "horsemen" surrounding a woman, including the effigy of Raja Utí, perhaps the most crudely executed of the group.

The owner does not much care for our presence, that is obvious. We will never definitely learn the name of the husband of boru Sihiti, who holds a tobacco box, not a *demban* (betel leaves) box, in her hands. Could it be Raja Utí?

We do learn, however, that Raja Ompu Surung was deeply upset by the quarrels between his two sons, Raja Utí and the younger one, Raja Tampahan.

In the end, Tampahan decided to leave his father's village and went to found the hamlet of Huta Si Rao, 5 or 6 kilometres in the interior following the same path we took to arrive in the village.



Fig. 165 The *mejan* of Raja Ompu Surung Pasaribu in Huta Si Rao, carved in 1970, was the most beautiful "horseman" I had seen in thirty years. A small figure was lying on the neck of the *singa*, looking up at Ompu Surung. In about 1995, while the owner was away, the horseman's bust and head were broken off and stolen. For security purposes, the monument was transported to the back of the house of Ompu Surung's descendant. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.



Fig. 166 The front of the *mejan* of Huta Si Rao, in its present condition, without a "horseman". This *singa* is the only one known to adopt the form of the *gaja dompak* found on houses. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Fig. 167 *Singa* that decorated the façade of a Toba notable's house in Uluan, where it is called a *gaja dompak*. The resemblance to the head of Ompu Surung's mount (left) is obvious. H. 134 cm. Private collection. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

Raja Bondar is the fifth-generation descendant of Raja Uti. The ancestor bore the name of the famous sixteenth-century king of Barus, Raja Uti, who is said to have also been a Pasaribu and gave his blessing to the first Si Singamangaraja. There are so many legends on that subject that I shall refrain from making a comment. I do not have the imagination of Robert von Heine-Geldern, who wrote a breathtaking article on the "long-necked raja" of Barus.¹⁴

A last look at the row of *mejan* lined up in the garden of Raja Bondar leaves a sad impression. Where is the grace, the arched bodies of the women of aristocratic mien from the Middle Barus? Boru Silihi is not afforded any such grace, even though this is the only work preserved in Huta na Godang whose execution can be attributed to a professional *datu panggana*. All the others are slapdash jobs by rather maladroit sculptors.

The mutilation of the "horseman" of Huta Si Rao

After Huta na Godang, the path quickly becomes narrower. Our car barely manages to get through, noisily scraping against the bushes, which scratch the body of the vehicle. We come out in a pleasant clearing of sorts. It is 1987, there is little more than four houses with cinderblock walls and iron gable roofs. To the left, under an enormous sacred fig tree, is the most beautiful and the largest "equestrian" sculpture I have ever seen, the most refined as well (fig. 165).

The nude man, his right arm missing, was seated and held in both hands a little human figure, which lies on the neck of his mount. The "horseman's" lower legs are not tucked under, as the Kalasan tradition would have it, but form a right angle with the thighs. As for the head of the quadruped (unfortunately, it was very difficult to photograph, since the bright light of the sun

that passed through the overhanging sacred fig tree and combined with the lichen made the details of the sculpture invisible), it is that of a true *singa ni ruma*. To make it more legible, that photo can be compared to the one of a *singa* for the façade of a house in the “native land”. I therefore reproduce, next to the head of the mount, that of a *singa ni ruma* photographed in Uluan. (Completely disregard the rich engraved and painted decoration on the wooden monster head, and make an effort to locate the round eye, the nose, and the wide-open mouth from which the large tongue emerges.) Alongside these two images, I add a photo taken in 2011 of the same monument, now mutilated, though the *singa* head is intact. It has been stripped clean of its lichen and moved in front of the house of its owner. A *singa ni ruma* is reproduced next to it to show how both sculptures look alike (figs 166–67).

We have seen that the younger son of Raja Ompu Surung Pasaribu, whose given name was Tampahan, became angry with his brother Utí and went off to found the village of Si Rao. The current chieftain of that village, a fifth-generation descendant of Tampahan, explains to us that Raja Surung, distressed about his younger son’s departure, carved with his own hands an effigy of himself and had it transported to Huta Si Rao, to the site where it was still located in 1987. (Perhaps Raja Surung, before his migration to the coastal region, was one of those *datu panggora* responsible for decorating the traditional houses.) It is therefore not a funerary monument but a prestige monument, intended to remind the lineage descending from his royal person, and now far from the elder branch of its lineage, how skilful and proud he was.

Raja Surung’s son Utí, who remained in Huta Sugasuga, and then his descendants, entrusted to sculptors without talent the task of providing them with another effigy of Raja Ompu Surung: we could catch a glimpse of it.

Curious events impel us to return to Huta Si Rao. In about 1995, a rumour spread—no one knows how—that a shopkeeper from Medan had offered a high price to the owner of the beautiful self-portrait of Ompu Raja Surung Pasaribu. The ungrateful descendant supposedly took the bait. According to the same rumour, the other man returned with the requisite equipment (I imagine a small truck with a hoist system, since the monument must have been very heavy). He was not counting on the path. The truck, being too wide, would not fit onto it. He must have been an idiot not to have realized that sooner. The buyer became discouraged and had to be content with acquiring the torso of the rider. Or so Anthony Pardede told me fifteen years ago.

In 2011, however, he returned to the site with Helder Da Silva. He was amazed to discover that the statue of the “horseman” had indeed lost its torso and head. The owner very angrily explained to Anthony that he had never agreed to sell anything. In his absence, some crook had broken the torso and carried it off, which induced him to place the statue in a safe place near his home, which was a small modern bungalow. Because it had been cleaned, it was possible to get a shot of the little human figure, formerly buried under lichen, on the neck of the *singa*. His identity is unknown to the villagers. His hands are joined, making the gesture of the *manombahuasi* blessing (thumbs and fingers separated). That man on the neck of the mount is a unique feature.



Figs 168a and b Sutan Mangan Hutagalung, raja of Huta Napitupulu, in his village, wedged between the cliff and the Indian Ocean, along the little road leading from Barus to Sibolga. A waterfall serves as a shower for the residents of the tiny hamlet. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photos by the author, 1987.

I shall not insult the descendant of Ompu Raja Surung by believing the rumour formerly reported to Anthony Pardede. He is obviously attached to the *mejan* of his illustrious ancestor, especially since, let us recall, the man portrayed carved it with his own hands.

Huta Napitupulu and the vanished *mejan* of Sibolga

The habit of burning the bones of the deceased after the flesh had been eaten away extended a long way in the direction of the Indian Ocean. About 15 kilometres from Sibolga is a tiny village called Huta Napitupulu, nestled at the foot of the cliff, from which a pleasant waterfall flows into a natural basin (fig. 168a). Barely 300 metres separate the beach running alongside the road from the cliff. Apparently, the great tsunami of 2004, then the milder one of 2007, did not ravage the poor coastal villages. In 1987, the name of the raja was Sutan Mangan

Hutagalung (sixty-eight years old at the time) (figs 168a–b). His ancestor had wanted to have a *mejan* carved in his image overlooking the village. The raja drags us into the dense forest, to a partly roughed-out block of stone; there, under the canopy of trees, a horse can be discerned. The head is still of a piece with the legs. The horseman's torso has been extracted from the block, but the head is missing. The raja declares that it once existed and that a tiger, mistaking the monument for a real man, long ago decapitated it with a swipe of its paw! As for the incompleteness of the work, one of the members of the *marga raja* gives an explanation that demonstrates the excellent experience of the supernatural that these Toba, so long away from the “native land”, still possess: “The sculptor did not have enough *sahala*.” Apart from a few old men I encountered in South Samosir during my first travels in the 1970s, I had never heard that term from the mouth of one of my informants.



Fig. 169 This group of sculptures was near Sibolga, either in Huta Poraha or in Pageran Ri, until about 1985, at which time it was sold to a "big city" dealer. It is likely that the bird in the foreground was the lid for a cinerary urn. The large figure riding a singa at right is accompanied by his wife (left).
Photo F. M. Schnitger, 1941.

For once, nothing had changed in 2011, except that the unfinished head of the horse was a little more damaged.

But it was in Sibolga that a group of magnificent sculptures existed (fig. 169), photographed by Ypes and published by Schnitger¹⁵: the effigy of a former village chieftain riding a quadruped with a bizarre head, accompanied by the portrait of his seated spouse, and especially, in the foreground, a cinerary urn, the photograph of which shows only the lid in the shape of a bird (its head is broken and lies on the ground), similar to the one in Huta Pananggalan in Simsip country (see fig. 141).

Sibolga is a port so far from Kalasan country that an investigation had to be conducted to find

these monuments, evidence of the adoption of the practice of cremating ancestral bones. A first exploration during one of my two visits in 1980 produced nothing. Then, unfortunately, other occupations absorbed me elsewhere. A further attempt was made in 1987, when I found myself in the coastal region to admire the statue of boru Barutu and the horseman of Huta Si Rao, which Anthony had discovered in my absence. I learned that the "Schnitger" statues had been moved to a village close to Si Rao called Huta Poraha. The chieftain of that village, Raja Bendil Hutagalung (fig. 170), seventy-eight years old at the time, was a ninth-generation descendant of Tuan datu Timpus Hutagalung.¹⁶ For unknown reasons, that ancestor left the region surrounding

Tarutung in the Silidung Valley in the late seventeenth century¹⁷ (there is no reference to an earthquake) and came to found Pagararan (not Pageran) Ri. He had two sons, the elder of which, Raja Tongku Sumurung Hutagalung, became the most important chieftain of the entire region, thanks to his authority and to the riches he had accumulated. The "equestrian" statue that Ypes photographed in the 1920s, published by Schnitger, was his portrait.

Raja Bendil clarified that it had been carved in 1720¹⁸ by a *datu panggana* who had worked with Indian sculptors. According to him, many boats at the time were making the journey between Sibolga and India.

In any event, in March 1987 the group of statues was no longer in place. What had happened? Raja Bendil explained that they had been sold about a year earlier, without his consent, and that a major dispute had arisen following that transaction, since several Hutagalung lineages from the surrounding area, descending from Raja Tongku Sumurung, had demanded their share of the payment collected. Even the Pasaribu *marga boru* had raised protests. Finally, the Sibolga police heard about it and seized the statues before they could be delivered to the buyer.¹⁹

Let us leave aside these anecdotes. The important thing is that, even in the first half of the eighteenth century, the custom of cremating the bones of the deceased and of placing them in a small urn, near an "equestrian" statue of the deceased and a seated statue of his wife, was already being practised in the region of Sibolga! Tuan datu Timpus Sumurung was the son of an individual of noble birth, it seems, born in the Silindung



Fig. 170 Raja Bendil Hutagalung. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo by the author, 1987.

Valley where the Toba held their first interment (so that the flesh would be removed from the bones). Then, after a few generations, when the deceased had enough descendants and they were rich enough to hold a *horja turun*, feast, or even the great feast, *santi rea*, they exhumed the bones, which were ritually washed and deposited in a *parholian* (bone receptacle). If the ancestor was far-sighted, he had a stone sarcophagus (*batu gaja*) carved during his lifetime. If his descendants were numerous, the *parholian* was a sarcophagus endowed with an enormous *singa* head, with the mass of the tomb representing, I believe, the body of a large serpent and not a bark or some other object, as has been suggested. Burton and Ward saw one in the Silindung Valley in the first half of the nineteenth century.



Fig. 171 Large Simsims "horseman" mounted on an elephant, or rather, on a *singa* with an elephant-like appearance, since it has neither tusks nor large ears. In front, under the trunk, a carving of a small *kala* head. H. 141 cm. Quai Branly Museum, Paris. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Studio Ferrazzini Bouchet.

In what way and by what circuits of family relationships, intertribal marriages, had the ritual of cremating bones, which originated in about 1600 in Kalasan country, already arrived on the shores of the Indian Ocean by the late seventeenth century, crossing unforgiving mountains covered with dense, uninhabited forests, all the way to Sibolga? If the date of

1720 for the creation of the "stone horseman" is right, it is probably the body of the deceased that was burned, not his bones. I cannot give any explanation for this account, but the facts are there. The statues had disappeared by the time I finally discovered the place where Ypes had photographed them. By chance, the old raja Bendil was still alive in 1987 and indicated to me who was represented astride what was, in fact, a *singa*.

The reader who has had the patience to read this far and who has looked at the photos illustrating my remarks, will immediately recognize the wide "fish mouth", its two lips opening like the petals of a flower to let a large tongue coiled on itself stick out (fig. 169). There is no doubt: what we have before our eyes is the avatar of Naga Padoha. Nevertheless, the (local?) sculptor carved on the monster's muzzle, in high relief, elephant tusks (the other side is not visible, but there is no reason to think it is not symmetrical). Although the mythical animal has no trunk, the *datu panggana* wanted to confer on it a hybrid character, which I cannot explain without engaging in all sorts of hypotheses that would pointlessly expand this book. I will ask only one question: When the "horseman's" mount is a true elephant, is it really that animal being represented, or is a *singa* still hiding behind the trunk and tusks? Personally, I tend to believe that both cases can be found: sometimes the tongue becomes a real trunk, without the animal having the tusks and large ears of an elephant (fig. 171); and sometimes the sculptor, no longer exactly sure why the buffalo-serpent had to be selected, decided to perch the wealthy and eminent raja on the most formidable of mounts, namely, the elephant, reconnecting with the long-ago

injunction of Guru Kalasan, who could not have suspected that the Batak would prefer the *singa*. Such a sculptor's initiative is the same as that of the Toba sculptor of Muara, south of Lake Toba, who gives the celebrated personage a true horse as a mount, the equine being a sign of wealth. That monument was associated with no ritual cremation of the dead man's bones but was intended solely to underscore, to augment, the prestige of the man portrayed.

Notes

1. I retain these geographical designations so as not to multiply the names of local districts and regions and in order to make the book more readable. The inhabitants of the Upper Barus, between Pakkat and Parlilitan (where Kalasan and Toba meet), were certainly less wealthy than those of the Lower Barus, enriched by trade as well as commerce in camphor and benzoin resin, produced in the forests of the Barisan Mountains. I know of no stone monument from either of the two regions that predates the eighteenth century, and which, as a result, would go back to the glorious age of the kingdom of Barus, whose sovereign seems to have been a member of the Pasaribu *marga* in the sixteenth century (there are still several poor Pasaribu lineages in the region). Two centuries certainly elapsed between the arrival of Guru Kalasan in about 1600 and the adoption by the neighbouring Toba of his rules: the cremation of bones and the creation of an equestrian statue for the deceased, and even a separate effigy for his wife.
2. Except in the case of the woman of Huta Si Horbo, whose face may have been mutilated, the clear, sharp chin line being a Toba characteristic.
3. *Gading* means "ivory", the material from which the very simple bracelets that the raja placed above his elbow were likely made. The name has remained, now applied to bracelets made of brass or silver, which Simsim rajas wear on the wrist.
4. In Parik Sinombah, my informers say "Barutu". Among the members of that Simsim *merga*, in Dairi, the word is pronounced "Berutu", elided to "Brutu".
5. Do I need to recall that that cordillera stretches as far as the lower part of Sumatra? It therefore runs some 1,700 kilometres.
6. *Ronggur ni ari* literally means "thunderbolt of day". Boru Barutu, or Br'utu, must have been born during a storm.
7. It is terrifying to think that such a masterpiece, which encapsulates all the dignity of the Toba people, could

have met the same fate as the "horseman" of Huta Si Rao, smashed with a sledgehammer. It was so beautiful under its sacred fig tree. A few years later, a collaborator from the Barbier-Mueller Museum, on a mission to Nias, made a detour through Sibolga and Barus to contemplate it and to take photos. It was not seen again in situ: it appeared on the European antiquities market, offered by the correspondent for a gallery in Singapore. It passed from the collections of the Barbier-Mueller Museum to those of the Quai Branly Museum, when I decided that my Indonesian collection should not be broken up but conferred upon it.

8. Warneck 1977, p. 161.

9. Ibid. p. 230.

10. That village is located on the secondary road leading from Pintu Bosi to Si Borongborong, which joins the main road linking Si Borongborong to Dolok Sanggul and to Limbing (see map, p. 36).

11. I consulted all possible sources to find the origin, unquestionably Toba, of the Barutu, or Bērūtu, or Br'utu, Simsim clan. See p. 31 n. 14 in my article in *Art tribal* (1993, pp. 3–35).

12. That name can be translated as "who made himself useful at the beginning (of an event, a divine cult, etc.)".

13. *Bondar* means: rivulet, brooklet, drain. In the *pidari* era, when the flooded rice fields (*saba*) of several villages depended on a single source of water, water distribution (*aeq parsaba*) was entrusted to a man known for his honesty and impartiality. He bore the title "Raja Bondar". The man in question does not perform any function of that kind.

14. Heine-Geldern 1959, pp. 361–404.

15. Schnitger 1941–42, p. 220 ff.

16. Waldemar Hoetagaloeng's *Poestaha taringot toe tarombo ni Bangso Batak* (1926), p. 237, mentions that Tuan datu Timpus.

17. And therefore before the Pasaribu of Huta na Godang previously mentioned. They belong to a different lineage and do not know one another.

18. The exactness of the date stunned me. I report it here, with scepticism. But if the exact year is wrong, the time period when the work was created is correct.

19. I went to speak to the chief of police of Sibolga. The statues were not stored at his station. He knew perfectly well what was at issue, however. He intimated that the monuments were "gone". Unfortunately, I could not appeal to Archbishop Anicetus Sinaga of Sibolga, with whom I was corresponding, since he was absent from his diocese.

Preparing a pig for a wedding feast in the Kalasan village of Huta Amborgang. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Conclusion



CONCLUSION

In my introduction, I said that, because the Kalasan are of Toba origin, I was obliged to portray, in broad strokes, the sociopolitical organization of the Toba Batak, their beliefs, and the socioreligious importance of their village chieftains (*raja*) and magicians (*datu*).

Above all, the reader must not believe that my account deals with all aspects of Toba civilization in the *pidari* era, that is, before the work of the German Christian missions undertaken in about the mid-nineteenth century, and the forcible colonization by the Dutch, who in 1907 killed the war chief and magician Si Singamangaraja XII, whose abilities had been considered limitless.

The resistance ended almost everywhere at that moment, of course. Many regions, however, had not been Christianized (Kalasan country in part and Pakpak in general, indicated on the map, p. 24). Yet the architecture differs between the two regions (on the façades of houses, protomes of mythic animals such as the *singa*, omnipresent among the Toba, exist only among the Western Karo), which might be the sign of a difference in beliefs or simply of the poverty of village residents who can only afford sheds.

In the part of the book devoted to the Toba, only what is consistent or contrary to a Kalasan ritual or custom is recorded. I limited myself to the responses I received, striving to formulate my questions in the most neutral manner possible, so as to avoid hearing what I wanted to hear. Hence the wearing of masks by the magicians during

funerals, attested and photographed among the Toba, appears to have been unknown to the Kalasan. As a result, I left out that practice. That is only one of ten examples.

The two "magic wands" of the Toba, the *tunggal panaluau* and the *tungkot malehat*, seem to have existed among the Pakpak and the Karo. I would swear that the young noble Toba émigrés who founded a new clan, which became the Kalasan after the Indian sage of the same name came through, would not have been able to rule in peace if their *datu* had not possessed the two wands, certainly the most important of their "professional instruments". But I have no proof. Did Guru Kalasan ban them? In any event, whenever the subject came up in conversation, someone always said: "Oh yes! The magic wands of the Toba", but no one ever made any allusion to their existence among the Kalasan themselves. It should be clear why I did not ask the question directly: "Did you have magic wands?" One has to please the stranger, the guest who has come so far to study one's ancestors. Hence the reply would have been yes, we possessed them a long time ago, a long, long time ago. That is certain.

I reiterate my conviction that I have rightly attributed the creation of effigies of powerful chieftains or magicians riding stone quadrupeds to the Pakpak Simsim. That way of honouring the dead, so different from Toba ways (but which, without the advent of Guru Kalasan, might have had some resemblance to those of the Simalungun, according to Tichelman and Voorhoeve), is truly what distinguishes the Kalasan from their Toba relations from the "native land". Nevertheless, how can we rule out the possibility that the Simsim, in frequent

contact with the Toba, did not simply adapt, on a monumental scale, the wood effigies of rajas and *datu* riding *singa*, which are represented on the lids of Toba magic receptacles (figs 56 and 147)? I do not doubt that these wooden figures of individuals riding *singa* existed long before the most ancient stone *mejan*, created at the injunction of Guru Kalasan about four hundred years ago. Then, too, I have always kept in mind the great "horseman on a buffalo" of Pasemah: I cannot erase it from my thoughts.

Regarding the Pakpak Simsim, I briefly evoked the "double horsemen" of the Bancin *mérga*, now isolated from Kuta Pananggalan, the village of the descendants of the individuals portrayed on the statues, located 4.7 kilometres south of Salak in the *kabupaten* of Pakpak Bharat (pp. 160–61). These are the only ones that Anthony and other colleagues of mine have ever seen in Pakpak country¹: the mounts are quadrupeds, buffalo-*singa*, identifiable by their long coiled tongues. They bear two people, the

Fig. 172 This photo, taken near the village of Huta Bolon, not far from Tomok (Samosir Peninsula), was sent to the author by Peter van der Broek (our warm thanks to him). It is a copy of a couple riding an elephant or *singa*, a theme heretofore observed only in Pakpak Simsim country. The author went to Huta Bolon twice in the 1970s and 1980s, where there existed nothing of the kind. The forger made a serious mistake: he adorned both equestrians with large *golang-golang* bracelets, even though they were worn only by the wife, placed ahead of her husband on the back of the mount. One cannot be too careful with stone sculptures. For example, patina is not a reliable criterion. In a hot and rainy climate, moss appears very quickly, white and circular lichen more slowly.



deceased raja on the hindquarters, and in front of him, on the neck, his wife.

In taking leave of the reader, I shall reveal that, a long way from Salak, on the peaks of the eastern shore of Samosir Island, in the village of Huta Bolon, a quarter hour by car from Tomok, Toba sculptors have begun to fabricate fake "double horsemen", based on photographs of actual Simsims monuments. A correspondent, Peter van den Broek of Hilversum, sent me a photo (fig. 172) that shows skilful craftsmanship, capable of fooling the unsuspecting, once the rain has allowed some lichen to accumulate on the stone. But a forger, in his desire to make his work more attractive, always makes a mistake: in the present case, he adorned the forearms of both individuals with long, coiled-wire bracelets, known as *golang golang*, which only the figure in front ought to wear, since they are female ornaments! The figure behind would normally be entitled to the *gading*, a rather thin bracelet worn above the elbow by the Toba rajahs and on the wrist by the Simsims rajahs.²

So much for the anomalies. They are extremely rare. Despite my ignorance of religious ethnology, I am certain that, in ceasing to recopy what the German authors of the twentieth century have said in insipid catalogues, in adding the information bequeathed to us by the missionaries (from the mere reports addressed to the Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft in Barmen to the substantial writings of Warneck and the documents left behind by van der Tuuk, which ought, as a matter of priority, to be translated and published) and what could be extracted

from the syncretic religions professed today, especially those of the Toba (foremost among them, the *ugamo malim*), and finally, in focusing better on what can still be seen and identified in the field, we have means for deciphering the symbolic meaning of certain objects found in museums. It lies within everyone's reach. *Nasa na sudasa!*³

Notes

1. We did not discover them. They had been identified back in the 1920s.
2. The discovery of skilful falsifications is very important. It would justify continuing research on the field. Some regions of Batak country had only very little contact with the outside world and nobody has ever carried out research there (for example in the centre of Karo country, or in the chain of Barisan Mountains and their foothills between Barus and Sibolga). Unlike some pessimistic authors, I do believe that continuing to research is essential. Batak country is vast: we are a long way from having inventoried all the stone monuments surviving, whose state of preservation is, however, sometimes disastrous.
3. "That is all that any of us can do."

Fig. 173 Datu Nahum Nainggolan praying in Huta Sipang. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



A strange and very ancient sarcophagus of the Sihaloho *marga* in Huta Siopatsosor (Samosir). abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



Glossary



GLOSSARY

ADAT: customary law, the violation of which is *pantang* (laid under an interdict).

AEK (Toba), LAE (Pakpak), LAU (Karo): waterway, river.

AEK PARSABA: water distribution of a source.

AGAMA: religion in Bahasa Indonesia; same as *ugamo* in Toba.

AGAMA SI RAJA BATAK: sect existing south-west of Lake Toba especially, among the Toba from the region of Dolok Sanggul. It seems that its founders were Christians who wanted to keep a few gods from the old pantheon, as in the case of the *agama Si Singamangaraja*. Not studied.

AGAMA SI SINGAMANGARAJA: sect existing west of Lake Toba especially, among the Toba of Upper Barus and the Kalasan Pakpak, which considers Si Singamangaraja the *malim* (teacher), *nabi* (prophet) or *anak* (son) of the supreme god, Mula Jadi na Bolon. This sect has not yet been the object of study. Supposedly it was founded by Raja Babiat Situmorang, Si Singamangaraja XII's friend.

ALAMAN: central square of Toba villages, between the residential houses on one side and the *sopo* (rice granaries) on the other.

AMA: father.

ANAK: child.

ANAK NI DEBATA: son of god.

ASU: dog.

BABIAT: tiger.

BAGAS: Toba synonym for *ruma*, a Malay word meaning "house". Used in the expression *bagas porsantian*, the sacred house of the ancestor who founded a lineage (*saompu*) or a clan (*marga*) in the native village. According to the informant Guru Ferdinand Halasan Silalahi (seventy-eight years old in 1980), in the house there was always: a *ragaraga* (a suspended altar for offerings to the ancestors); a *guriguri* (a receptacle attached to the *ragaraga* containing a magical product); and a *tunggal panaluan* (magic wand). Near the house were two stone *pangulubalang* (magical human figures), a sacred fig tree (*ficus religiosa*), called *harihara*, as well as a spring, *homban*. To these, Warneck (1977 p. 221) adds the pair of *debara idup*. Since this book covers too much material already, I have not spoken of the internal divisions of the traditional house or of its architecture, which stands as a symbol of the Three Worlds: Upper, Middle and Lower. See *jabu*.

BAHAL: entry cut into a short side of the *parik* (wall) surrounding a Toba village. Most of the time, there is only one *bahal* in the *parik*.

BAHASA INDONESIA: official language of Indonesia (almost identical to Malay).

BAKKUWANG: a mat made of pandanus leaves among the Pakpak Kepas (see *hoda-hoda bakkuwang*).

BANGSO: nation.

BANUA GINJANG: the Upper World.

BANUA TONGA: the Middle World.

BANUA TORU: the Lower World.

BAO: forbidden, taboo.

BATU GAJA (literally, "elephant stone"): the large sarcophagus for the bones of Toba from the "native land", about 3 metres long, with a *singa* head carved on the front part. Found especially in Samosir and around Lake Toba, but there is also one 5 kilometres from the Indian Ocean, near Barus.

BEGU: 1) soul of an ancestor, which is not a living individual's soul (*tondi*), which follows him into the hereafter and undergoes a transformation. The *tondi ni na mate*, the soul of the deceased, appears at the time of death. 2) a supernatural being, beneficent or maleficent.

BEREMPAT: sovereign, synonym of *raja na opat*.

BISUK: intelligent, sagacious.

BIUS: region occupied by different clans (*marga*) with interests in common—water management of the paddies, for example—but not necessarily kinship ties. These *marga* gathered periodically for major feast days, with a great number of water buffalo (*horbo*) sacrifices. Early on, the Dutch colonial authority banned that *bius* holiday.

BONA NI ARI: (literally, "the beginning of days") the most important *marga*, the one that has given a famous female ancestor, the wife of a great man, to a clan.

BONDAR: rivulet, brooklet, drain (only used for the irrigation of the paddies).

BOROTAN: tree or trunk planted in the middle of a Toba village square, to which was attached the water buffalo (*horbo*) to be sacrificed by the *datu*. The scene is often painted in the centre of the façades of Toba houses.

BORU: 1) a clan that has taken a wife from another clan, which becomes its *marga hulahula*. 2) a daughter of brothers from the paternal side.

BULAN: moon or month in Toba and Bahasa.

BULU or BULUH: bamboo. *Bulu suga*, thorny bamboo, planted on the walls (*parik*) surrounding Toba villages.

BUPATI: high official who runs a *kabupaten* (regency or prefecture) within a province, such as Sumatera Utara (North Sumatra).

CAMAT: official who runs a *kecamatan*, a district.

DALIHAN NA TOLU: name given to the three large stones on which a pot is placed on the hearth inside a house. Metaphorically, it is the name given to the perfect matrimonial organization, in which clan A would give its daughters to clan B, which would give its daughters to clan C. If that system is not followed, the social balance is compromised. Similarly, if one of the three hearthstones is removed, the pot topples over. In reality, each clan

gives its daughters to numerous clans and takes its wives from multiple clans, though the daughter of a maternal uncle is the ideal spouse.

DATU: magician, diviner, healer. When he accepts students and teaches his knowledge, he is called a guru by the Toba. The Karo are unfamiliar with the term *datu*. All their magicians are guru, a word borrowed from Sanskrit. The *datu panggana* specializes in the sculpture of anthropomorphic effigies (*ganaganaan*). The *datu panggara* is the one who produces the carved and painted decoration on the façade and sides of a traditional house, highlighting that decoration in white, black and red. He also paints scenes on the side panels: mythical figures, trees of life, and so on. The style of these panels shows that the same *datu* also executed drawings in the *pustaha* books of magic.

DATU DI MANUK: hen diviner whose predictions relied on the interpretation of the footprints left by a hen whose throat was cut under a basket.

DATU NI SINGA or DATU PARSINGA: variant of the *datu panggana*.

DATU PANGGANA (Toba), DATU PENGGANA (Karo): magician-sculptor of statues.

DATU PANGGORGA: magician sculptor of the foliated decorations in slight relief on Toba traditional houses.

DEBATA: any god or goddess.

DEBATA IDUP: a pair of statuettes of unnamed ancestors hanging from the roof of the *jabu porsantian* (ancestral home) in the original site of the *marga*.

DEBATA NI TONGA: "gods of the Middle" referring to human beings.

DELENG (Pakpak, Karo), DOLOK (Toba): mountain.

DEMBAN: betel. See *pinang*.

DOMIA: earth, world.

DONGAN SABUTUHA (*marga*): clan to which an individual belongs, that of his father, his uncle, his ancestors. In 1980, every Toba in the villages was able to trace his genealogy back to Si Raja Batak (about twenty to twenty-five generations).

DURI-DURI: earrings.

GADING: 1) elephant ivory; 2) the bracelet reserved for the *raja* (village chief). Fairly thin, it is worn above the elbow by the Toba.

GAJA DOMPAK: (literally, an elephant [*gaja*] with its face turned toward someone [*dompak*]) synonym of *singa ni ruma*. The *gaja dompak* are placed on either side of the façade of traditional Toba houses.

GAMBIER: plant gum added to the quid made from betel leaf and areca nut.

GANAGANAAN.

GANAGANAEN (Toba), GANAGANAEN (Karo): sculpture, effigy.

GÉRITEN: Karo hut with a complex roof containing the ancestors' bones.

GOAR: name.

GODANG: tall, powerful.

GOLANG-GOLANG, GELANG-GELANG (Pakpak) (according to Let Solin, an informant from the Simsim village of Tangga Batu, the correct Pakpak spelling would be *gellang-gellang*): large woman's bracelet formed from a thick-coiled brass wire (reaching from the wrist to almost the elbow) worn in pairs on both arms.

GORGA: decoration in slight relief, highlighted in black, white and red.

GURDONG or GURDUNG: twisted, bent.

GURIGURI: particular type of small vessels containing magic materials, especially *pupuk* made of parts of a sacrificed child's body.

GURU: magician (*datu*) teaching his art to students (Toba); magician in Karo.

HABISUON: the quality of the soul conferred by the *sahala* (soul force) that produces intelligent people (from *bisuk*, intelligent, sagacious).

HADATUON: the faculty of an individual's soul to produce a good magician, a good *datu*. See *sahala*.

HALA: scorpion.

HALAK JAU: individual who does not belong to the Batak people (Warneck 1977, p. 65).

HAMALIMON: the faculty of Si Singamangaraja XIII's soul that allowed him to be the interpreter, the teacher of the word of the supreme god, Mula Jadi na Bolon, to be his prophet in short. *Malim ni debata* means "teacher of the word of God" (in Arabic, *maalim* signifies "teacher"). *Nabi* (the same word as in Arabic) means "prophet".

HAMINJON: weeping fig tree (*ficus benjamina*). The benzoin (resin) from the weeping fig of the Barisan Mountains, exported since antiquity through the port of Barus (Ptolemy makes mention of it), was famous throughout the world.

HAPUR BARUS: camphor. By itself, the word *hapur*, or *kapur*, means "lime" (calcium hydroxide), and *parhapuran* is the appropriate amount of lime to be placed in the betel leaf (*demban*) alongside a piece of areca nut (*pinang*) to obtain a quid.

HARAJAON: the faculty of an individual's soul that allows him to command, to rule, to be the *raja* of a village. See *sahala*.

HARIHARA: 1) Cosmic tree. 2) sacred fig tree (*ficus religiosa*). To found a village, the first thing to be done was to plant the *harihara* between the residential houses and the rice granaries, arranged in two rows facing each other. HARIHARA SUNDUNG DI LANGIT: according to Stöhr, "sacred fig tree looking to the sky", that is the celestial or cosmic tree.

HATOBAN: slave. Slavery was a temporary social condition.

HAUMA SABA: rice farming in irrigated terraces (*sawah* in Malay).

HAUMA TUR: a rice field cultivated by the dry, slash-and-burn method.

HODA-HODA BAKKUWANG: the name that H. H. Bartlett gave to a Toba stone horseman located a short distance south of Si Borongborong. It has since been moved to the top of a cement tomb. No one today is familiar with that term in Si Borongborong, Samosir or elsewhere in the western part of Toba country, nor among the Pakpak Kalasan or Simsims, who are major sculptors of "equestrian" statues. Among the central Pakpak Kepas, the word *bakkuwang* designates a mat of pandanus leaves. It is unknown to the Toba. The statue of a man astride any quadruped is called *marhoda gaja* among the Toba and the Pakpak Kalasan. It is called *merkuda gaja* among the other Pakpak and the Karo, who do not possess any such statues but do know of them. The word used by Bartlett was adopted by several authors (Parkin, Sibeth, and others), no doubt without verification in the field.

HODA (Toba), KUDA (Pakpak, Karo): horse. *Hoda-hoda* means "that which resembles a horse" (when referring to a statue).

HODA-HODA BANGHUANG: name given in a catalogue of the Asian Civilisations Museum of Singapore to the wood horsemen used as stoppers on receptacles of magical substances. It is likely that this is a variant of Bartlett's term *hoda-hoda bakkuwang*. In this case, the term is not just doubtful but wrong, since in Karo Batak the horse is called *kuda*, not *hoda*.

HOLI: bone (see *parholian*).

HOLI HOLI: bones.

HOMANG: goblins who enjoy making the lives of villagers difficult.

HOMBUNG: storage chest bed reserved for the head of the household. If he was "noble", that is, if he belonged to the *marga raja*, his storage chest bed was supported by two sideboards ending in *singa* heads. The principle is the same as for the *pandingdingan* (main lateral beams) on houses: the *singa*, in its capacity as representative of Naga Padoha (support of the Middle World, the dwelling place of human beings), is the support for the "essential man", the noble, head of the household and of the village. The entire storage chest is a *singa*, just as the entire stone sarcophagus is a *singa*.

HORBO: water buffalo (in Bahasa: *kerbau*).

HORJA: religious feast day that brings together the members of a single lineage of a *marga*, or even an entire *marga*, if it is not scattered throughout Toba country. *Horja turun*: funerary feast, during which the bones of ancestors are placed in stone or cement receptacles after the skull and long bones have been washed.

HOTANG: rattan.

HULAHULA (Toba), KALIMBUBU (Karo): a clan that has given a wife to another clan.

HUTA (Toba), KUTA (Pakpak, Karo): village, place, used before a noun: *Huta Tongatonga*.

ILIK: small lizard. This creature is respected, because the attribute animal of the minor deity of the earth, Boraspati ni Tano, is a lizard, represented in high relief on the back doors of the rice granaries.

INDUK PUNGUAN: (literally, "president of the assembly") high priest of the *parmalam*.

JABU: a synonym for *bagas* (house), *ruma* seemingly used primarily for beautiful decorated houses. The informant Tahi Situmorang called the original house of his lineage in Parmonangan *jabu porsantian*. It no longer contained anything but remained sacred. Among the Karo, the *jabu* corresponds to the residential space devoted to each family in the large house.

KABUPATEN (Bahasa word): regency, subdivision of a province in the Republic of Indonesia. At its head is a *bupati*.

KALA: terrifying protective spirit (Hindu origin) represented as a face sporting big round eyes.

KAPUR: lime.

KECAMATAN (Bahasa word): (pronounced "ketjamatan") administrative district, subdivision of a *kabupaten*. It is run by a *camat* (pronounced "tjamat").

LILIT: to surround.

LIMA SUAK: the five regions of Pakpak territory.

LOBU: location of a deserted village. Often the talus of the surrounding wall (*parik*) is still visible.

LOSUNG: mortar for pounding grains. *Losung batu* is a stone mortar, sometimes enormous, with several holes, which the *datu* had the power to fling through the air in order to destroy enemy villages, an act called *pahabang losung*. Two-holed stone mortar: *losung batu si dua mata*; three-holed stone mortar: *losung batu si tolu mata*; and so on. Small mortars used by magicians are called *pepene* or *losung ni datu*.

LOSUNG HAU: wood mortar.

LOSUNG NA BOI HABANG: the stone mortar (*losung batu*) becomes a *losung na boi habang* when it is thrown by a magician onto an enemy village to destroy it.

LUMBAN: village, used before a noun: *Lumban na Bolon*.

LUNDUNG: stretched out.

MAKARA: Hindu sea monster with open muzzle rounded into a sort of elephant's trunk.

MALIM: religion that draws its origins from the Arabic word teacher, *mwaâlim*.

MALIM NI DEBATA: teacher of the religion of Toba gods. Name given to Si Singamangaraja XII.

MALOSE: probably a verb, the meaning of which could not be determined.

MANGOARHON: action of changing someone's birth name.

MANGOMPA: human sacrifice. Probably from *ngomngom* (Warneck 1977, p. 164), meaning "to put something into

the mouth". In fact, according to all the evidence, a child was sacrificed by pouring melted lead into his mouth, after he was made to swear obedience to the *datu*. The soul of the sacrifice victim (*begu*) henceforth acted on behalf of its master.

MANISIA: humanity.

MANOMBA HUASI: a gesture of reverence in which the fingers are joined together on the chest (from *somba*, revere). A posture frequently observed on wood statues.

MANUK: hen, chicken.

MANUK DI AMPANG: hen confined under a wicker basket by the magician.

MARGA (Toba), MEGO, MERGO, M'RGA (Pakpak, Karo): clan, large or small. Vergouwen calls the "great clans" founded by the immediate descendants of Si Raja Batak "head marga". Membership in the clan is patrilineal. The *marga* are exogamous (endogamous marriage is considered incest).

M'RGA SI LIMA (Karo): among the Karo, there are five "great clans", called *m'rga* (or *mërga*) *si lima*, divided into eighty subclans, called simply *m'rga*. See *urung* and *sibayak*.

MARGA DONGAN SABUTUHA: see *dongan sabutuha*.

MARGA or M'RGA RAJA: clan to which the chief of a village belongs, in that village only.

MARHODA GAJA (Toba), MERKUDA GAJA (Pakpak): stone statue representing a figure astride a quadruped.

MARTAHI: ability to make good strategic plans.

MARTIMPUS: to be enveloped. Name of a mountain: Dolok Martimpus.

MARTURANGGONG: to be burned, cremated.

MATA: eye. This word is found in almost identical form in most of the languages from the large Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) family.

MATA NI ARI: literally, "the eye of day", the sun.

MEJAN: 1) a puppet whose upper body, covered with fabric, conceals the manipulator's arm. The head is carved in wood, but in the Balige region, that head used to be the skull of someone who had died without children to honour him. It was covered with clay and painted.

2) among the Pakpak Simsim, the Pakpak Kalasan, and all the Western Toba between Lake Toba and the Indian Ocean, the word *mejan* designates the stone statue, often "equestrian", devoted to a person of note, made during his lifetime or after his death, to which is attached a lidded stone urn that will contain his ashes, *turanggong*. These statues are found among all the groups that adopted the practice of incinerating the bones of the dead, a practice taught in about 1600 by an Indian sage, Guru Mpu Pandia Kalasan.

MIOK: to straighten up (again).

MONANG: to make a profit.

NABI NI DEBATA: prophet of god (*nabi* is an Arabic word meaning prophet, e.g. Nabi Mohammed).

NAGA: in the mythology, god or spirit having the shape of a snake.

NAGA MORSARANG: buffalo horn containing "medicines" or defensive magical products (without organic human elements), whose stopper is a *singa* head carved out of wood, topped by the effigy of one or several human figures. According to several seemingly reliable informants, they represent the *datu* who owns the horn or his master teacher (*guru*), and sometimes, behind the principal figure, the figures of several student magicians. According to Voorhoeve, the name can be explained as follows: in Malay, *sarang* is an insect nest, and the *naga* is supposedly "on his nest", which contains magical products. Naga Padoha is also the Master Magician, according to the *parmalim*, who call him Naga Padoha ni Aji, that is, the Dragon Padoha (Master) of Magic. The buffalo horn is suggestive of a snake's body. Here the *naga* is a reptile. Other times, it is a quadruped, a buffalo. Note that among the neighbouring Minangkabau, the Master of the Underworld is a buffalo holding the Middle World on its back.

NAPURAN: quid formed of a piece of areca nut placed inside a betel leaf along with lime, sometimes with the addition of a sort of vegetable gum.

NI AJI: of magic, Naga Padoha ni aji meaning Master of Magic. Title adopted by renowned magicians.

ODAP: small drum hollow at both ends, which are covered with skin.

ODAP ODAP: resembling a drum.

OMPU: grandfather, male ancestor.

ONAN: market.

ONGGANG: calao (rufous hornbill). During the Toba funerary dances, which disappeared early on, a dance called *hoda-hoda* (*hoda* means "horse") included the appearance of dancers wearing masks representing calaos. I do not know the reason for the horse/calao duality. It is likely that both animals were associated with the Upper World.

PAGAR: a fetish that can take various forms (anthropomorphic statuettes or mere stakes), with a square cavity into which a bit of magical substance—with a base of animal blood, grasses, etc., without any organic human matter—was placed. Its use was exclusively defensive: to repel the evil spirits that bring epidemics, for example.

PAGAR BATU: defensive stone fetish, sometimes uncarved.

PAGAR HAU: wood fetish, carved or roughed-out.

PANDINGDINGAN (Toba), PARDINGDINGAN (Karo): main lateral beam supporting the two sides of traditional Toba houses. On the façade, these beams ended with a notch for attaching a monstrous *singa ni ruma* head, carved separately, which adorned both sides of the façade,

projecting far outward. In western Karo country, some Karo houses were adorned with *takal singa* (*singa* heads). PANGULUBALANG: in the first sense, a magical preparation (*si biangsa, pupuk, sihat*) containing human fat (*miak* or *minak*) and/or other human organs (brain); it has an aggressive as well as a protective function. By extension, a human figure in wood or stone into which a bit of *pupuk* has been introduced. The magical substance can also be placed in a receptacle in the ground in front of the statue. *Tunggal panaluan* (magic wands) are *pangulubalang*.

PANTANG: sacred, forbidden. The equivalent of the Polynesian *taboo*.

PARANGGIRAN: a bowl in which the *datu*, or the person responsible for an offering, purifies his hands with lemon-scented water before an act of a religious nature.

PARBARINGIN: priests and priestesses named by Si Singamangaraja XII. They wore long tunics and, placed on their chignons, a large leaf from the sacred *baringin* (or *waringin*) tree, a variety of *ficus*.

PARHOLIAN: (*holi* = bone) receptacle for the skull and long bones only, during the second funeral, after the flesh is gone. That second funeral can take place a long time after the original interment.

PARTHUTAAN: a place where there is a village (*huta*).

PARIK: fortified enclosure formed by an earth embankment or stone wall, on which thorny bamboo is planted. In Toba villages, it is rectangular in shape.

PARMALIM, PORMALIM, PERMALIM: one who practises the *malim* religion.

PARMINAKAN, PERMINAKAN (or *permianakan*): small receptacle (generally an old pot of Chinese ceramic, a dozen centimetres tall at most), to which is added, among the Toba and the Karo, a delicately carved stopper, usually representing a figure riding a *singa*. Sometimes this figure bears another one in its shoulders. Other, more complex motifs exist among the Karo (where it is called *permianaken*). *Minak* (fat) refers to the organic human matter obtained through human sacrifice (of a child, according to the books of magic and the most credible informants), which forms the vessel for the magical preparation contained in the small pot: the *pupuk* (called *sihat* in the *pustaha* books of magic), or *sibiangsa, sibiaksa*. See also *pangulubalang* and *guriguri*. PARSIAKBAGI: religion founded by the disciples of Raja na Siakbagi (*na siakbagi*: a person who suffers), a disciple of Si Singamangaraja XII in the late nineteenth century. In about 1900, Raja na Siakbagi was imprisoned by the Dutch. The people persisted in believing that he had not died and that he was an incarnation of Si Singamangaraja. His disciples, along with others close to the "king of the Toba", foremost among them Raja Sutan Mulia Naipospos, first high priest (*induk pungan*)

of the *parmalim* and grandfather of Raja Marnongkok Naipospos, the current *induk pungan*, were undoubtedly the originators of the *ugamo parmalim*. PARSIMBORAON: lead amulet.

PATUNDANG: to turn one's back on one another.

PAUSEANG: patch of land granted by the raja to a young couple if the husband belongs to a *marga boru* and settles in his wife's village.

PELE: to make an offering.

PENGULU: chief heading the twelve small "states" forming with other territories the Karo country.

PIDARI: the period before colonization, when a permanent state of war existed between villages. The term is probably related to the Malay *paderi*. The "*Padri War*" gave rise to a bloodbath in northern Minangkabau territory and southern Batak territory in the early nineteenth century. The *padri* were Muslims who wanted to convert their neighbours by force.

PINANG: the nut of the areca palm. The areca nut is placed in the betel (*demban*) leaf with lime, or *hapur* (that is, calcium hydroxide), to obtain a quid (*napurun*).

PISO: knife, dagger. The *piso ni datu* is the knife reserved for the *datu*, used for animal sacrifices. In general, the blade is made of iron, the handle of carved wood or brass cast by the lost-wax process.

PORHALAAN: the Toba lunar calendar. *Hala* means "scorpion". On the calendar, the dangerous days are indicated by squares occupied by scorpions, the most dangerous days being those on which the insect's tail is situated.

PROVINSI: province.

PULO: island.

PUPUK: magic potion made with the corpse of a sacrificed human being. See also *sihat*.

PURBA: cardinal point, east (*timur* in Bahasa Indonesia).

PUSTAHA: recipe book of magic potions.

RAJA (a Sanskrit word for "king"): leader of a village, important personage, noble.

RAJA NA MORA: raja famous for his wealth.

RAJA NA OPAT: synonym of *berempat*, Karo sovereign.

RAJA NI HUTA: village chief.

RAGARAGA: suspended altar for offerings to the ancestors in the traditional dwelling of the lineage or clan founder.

RUMA ADAT: traditional house. Tradition imposes countless rules on its construction, layout, use, and so on. RUMA GORGA: Toba house decorated with engraved motifs and highlighted in white, black and red.

RUMA UHIR: house adorned with sculptures (*singa ni ruma*). A house adorned with *gorga* and *uhir* can therefore be called *ruma gorga ruma uhir*.

RUMBLI: 1) a large round wooden receptacle with a lid and two handles, made from a single piece of a large trunk, for keeping rice in houses; 2) a lidded stone urn,

conical in shape, slightly curved, for depositing bones during the second funeral. This meaning of the word is only current west of Lake Toba.

SAHALA: the quality, force of the soul of an individual predisposing him to accomplish what others would be unable to do. It is the *tandi* (soul), not the man that enjoys that power. The belief in the force of the soul is probably a trait common to the Austronesians. Compare what is called *mana* in Polynesia.

SANTI: major feast day of a religious nature.

SANTI REA: a very great feast day, held when the soul (*sumangot*) of an ancestor announces to his descendant in a dream that he has reached the third and highest rank in the Otherworld hierarchy, that of *sombaon*.

According to Warneck (1997 p. 221), it is at that time that the lineage can constitute itself as an independent *marga*.

SAOMPU: lineage (descendant of a single *ompu*, ancestor). A lineage was able to become an independent *marga*, in return for a great feast, when the founding ancestor called upon a descendant in a dream. The prohibition on marriage with the original *marga* was generally lifted at that time.

SEMAHEN: Karo version of the Toba word *sombaon*. It seems to me, based on the information I personally received in Liren and Lau P'rimbon, that it is the place of worship rather than the great ancestors' soul that is so designated.

SIBAGANDING or BAGANDING: well-defined species of spotted reptile, very venomous.

SIBASO (Toba): medium, woman or man going into a trance.

SIBAYAK: chief of the highest rank among the Karo, vassals of the sultan of Aceh.

SI BIAKSA or SI BIANGSA: magic potion containing *pupuk*, endowed with a power that enables it to intervene in the most desperate situations, to defeat the cleverest "nature spirits" and to counteract offensive magic practices.

SIGALE GALE: string-operated puppets that danced by night at the funerals of men who had died without children, to mourn them and to offer sacrifices to their souls.

SIHAT: human organic matter. According to Petrus Voorhoeve, term preferred to *pupuk* in the magic books.

SIMBORA: lead.

SIMEN, SEMEN or SIMIN: derivative of the word cement. Modern tombs.

SINGA: 1) a fabulous animal, which can take the form of a snake or of a buffalo whose body is covered in scales. It evokes or represents Naga Padoha, god of the Underworld, deity of evil, of death, but also of renewal and the fertility of the fields. That god transports the souls of the notable dead (*sumangot* and *sombaon*) to

their definitive resting place. The *parmalam* consider him a god of the Upper World. The *singa* (except on stone sarcophagi) is always characterized by a wide-open mouth, from which emerges a long and thick tongue, curving backward or even rolled up. The first travellers, such as Modigliani, mistook the tongue for an elephant's trunk. The *singa* on the façades of houses, or those carved on the back part of the sarcophagi, have horns, usually three. The quadrupeds with *singa* heads (buffalo-*singa*)—those, for example, that serve as mounts for eminent figures whose stone portraits can be seen among the Pakpak Simsims, the Pakpak Kalasan, and the Western Toba—have no horns. Although polymorphous, they are always identifiable by their open mouths and long tongues. 2) image, form. The *datu parsinga*, or *datu na i singa* (*datu ni singa*), are particularly skilled at carving anthropomorphic effigies. Archaic, little-used terms.

SINGA NI RUMA: head of a fantastic animal, sometimes adorned with three erect horns (the central horn much higher than the others), and sometimes with horns curving backward onto the nape of the neck. These heads are fixed to the end of the lateral beams (*pandingdingan*) supporting the habitable part of Toba houses. The *pandingdingan* and its head represent Naga Padoha, a huge snake god of the Underworld, which supports on its back the Middle World, where human beings live.

SINGA SINGA ULU GURDONG or GURDUNG: *gaja dompak* (a *singa* on the façade of rice granaries *sopo*), with three horns curving backward onto the nape of the neck. Reputed to be male.

SINGA SINGA ULU LUNJUNG: *gaja dompak* (*singa* on the façade of a Toba house, a *ruma* or *jabu adat*) with three standing horns, the central one much larger than the others. Reputed to be female.

SINOMBAH: "spirits" supposedly dwelling in the forests. They are collectively called *begu*.

SIPLEBEGU: one who venerates the spirits, who practises the *ugamo perbegu* religion. Animist.

SOGO (Toba), SOGI or SUGI (Pakpak): angry. It gave its name to the *marga* Kesugihen.

SOLU: former large Toba war boat.

SOMBA: the act of revering (the soul of an ancestor).

SOMBAON: soul of the "great ancestors" (see *singa*).

SOPO: rice granary in the upper story and meeting places or dormitories for young single men in the intermediate story, which has no side walls.

SOSOR: a new village, sometimes made up of huts, not traditional houses. The name continues to be used, however, even if large houses are built (used before a noun: *Sosor na Bolon*).

SUASA: brass (copper and zinc alloy). It was imported and used to manufacture the handles of knives and

other blades, pipes, and jewellery. The lost-wax process was used in their manufacture.

SUHUL: 1) handle of a sword or sabre; 2) incantation to stop an earthquake.

SUHUT: organizer of a feast day, for example, a *horja turun*. He belongs to the *marga raja* of the clan that invites its relatives, and he recites by heart the names of all the *marga hulahula* and all the *marga boru* in alliance with the lineage. He also makes offerings and performs sacrifices.

SUMANGOT: second of the three hierarchical positions of the soul (*begu*) in the hereafter. The *begu* of a rich man, a village chief, is designated as *sumangot* immediately after his death.

SUNDUT: generation. When a Batak recites his genealogy, every name represents a generation. I attributed thirty years to each generation, to determine the age of an ancestor's statue, for example. But that is misleading. One of my informants fathered a son at the age of seventy!

TAKAL SINGA: former name, identified by Volz and still known to the elders of the Western Karo villages, used to designate the half-animal, half-human heads adorning the ends of the horizontal beams on either side of their houses. It corresponds to the *singa ni ruma* or *gajah dompak* of the Toba. Today the Western Karo call them *kuda-kuda* (resembling a horse).

TANO (Toba), TANEH (Karo): earth.

TANTAN: means something like "suspended from somewhere or something high".

TAOAR: talisman. An amulet or small piece of iron inserted into a brass bracelet or ring, and the ring itself.

TAROMBO: genealogical tree, genealogy.

TONDI: the soul of a living being (human, animal, even plants like rice). It is fairly independent, tending to have fits of temper and even to leave the body housing it, which results in an illness. The Toba worship their own *tondi*. After death, the *tondi* returns to the supreme god, Mula Jadi na Bolon, who attributes it to a newborn with a new destiny, inscribed on a leaf of the mythical Jambubarus tree. See *begu*.

TONDI NI NA MATE: the soul of the deceased (that is the *begu*).

TOPENG: Toba and Karo masks used at ceremonies, mostly funerary.

TUAN: title of the village or district chiefs in Simalungun territory, named by the sovereigns (*raja opat* or *berempat*) ruling over the Eastern Batak (*Timur Batak* in Bahasa, that is Batak Simalungun).

TUGU: word borrowed from Javanese, where it designates a boundary stone. A *tugu*-type tomb is surmounted by a tall quadrangular obelisk of sorts. There is now a tendency to call all modern tombs *tugu*, but their name is *semen* (derived from the word cement).

TUNGGAL: virile.

TUNGGAL PANALUAN (Toba), TUNGKAT PENALUEN (Karo): carved magic wand always surmounted by a principal human figure on the shoulders of another figure by a buffalo, frequently with a body covered in scales (*a singa*), and by other human figures. Myths were recorded in the nineteenth century bestowing a name and a legend to the figures appearing on these wands. These myths may well have been composed to satisfy the curiosity of the European scientists. According to my informants, the *tunggal panaluan* was manipulated by a *datu*, provided he was also a raja or a member of the *marga raja* of the village. Having received a magical charge (*pupuk*), it must be considered a *pangulubalang*. It seems that the wand was to be kept in the chief's house, not in the *pantangan* hut where the *datu* kept his work instruments. The name of the wand may have been derived from *tunggal* (virile) and *toluan* (*panatoluan*), from *tolu* ("three"), though I do not find that explanation very satisfying.

TUNGGUL: the one in charge, the leader.

TUNGKOT MALEHAT (Toba), TONGKAT MALEKAT (Karo): sometimes called the "little brother" of the *tunggal panaluan*. This magic wand (*tungkot malehat*), smaller than its associate, is topped by the effigy of the *datu* who carved it (or so it is believed), astride a quadruped with a *singa* head, which represents Naga Padoha, god of the Underworld. It contains no magical charge. *Tunggot* (Vergouwen p. 233) is also the word used to designate a man's second wife, younger than the first, and who serves as her "assistant". *Malehat* is said to come from the Arabic *malek*, angel, supernatural being.

TURANGGONG: ashes.

UGAMO (Toba) or AGAMA (Bahasa Indonesia)

MALIM: a religion with many members, especially on the island of Samosir and south of Lake Toba. Founded in the late nineteenth century, it considers Si Singamangaraja XII (killed by Dutch bullets in 1907) to be the *nabi* (prophet) or *anak* (son) of Mula Jadi na Bolon, supreme god of the ancient Toba religion. The first variant indicates a Muslim influence, the second a Christian one. In all cases, Si Singamangaraja is the *malim* (from the Arabic *mwaâlim*, that is, "teacher" of the supreme god).

UGAMO PERBEGU: traditional religion of the Batak, centred primarily on offerings to the souls of ancestors and on their worship. *Ugamo* is the equivalent of the Bahasa *agama*.

UGAMO SI RAJA BATAK: see *agama Si Raja Batak*.

UHIR: decoration in relief.

UHUM: justice, rules of a legal nature explaining how to apply justice and, for example, how to punish violations of the *adat*.

ULOK: snake.

ULU: head, is frequently used to name a chief, a leader of men.

ULUBALANG: war chief.

ULU PUNGUAN: (literally, "head of the assembly") priest of the *parmalim*.

URUNG: one of the eleven independent territories among the Batak Karo, whose sovereign is called *sibayak*. In principle, the *sibayak* were vassals of the sultan of Aceh (pronounced "Atjeh") north of the island and were enthroned by him. That vassalage was entirely theoretical, since even today the Karo have the highest percentage of animists, whereas the people of Aceh have been Muslim since the fifteenth century.

UNTE: lemon juice.

Coffee season in Lumban Sihaloho. abm—archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



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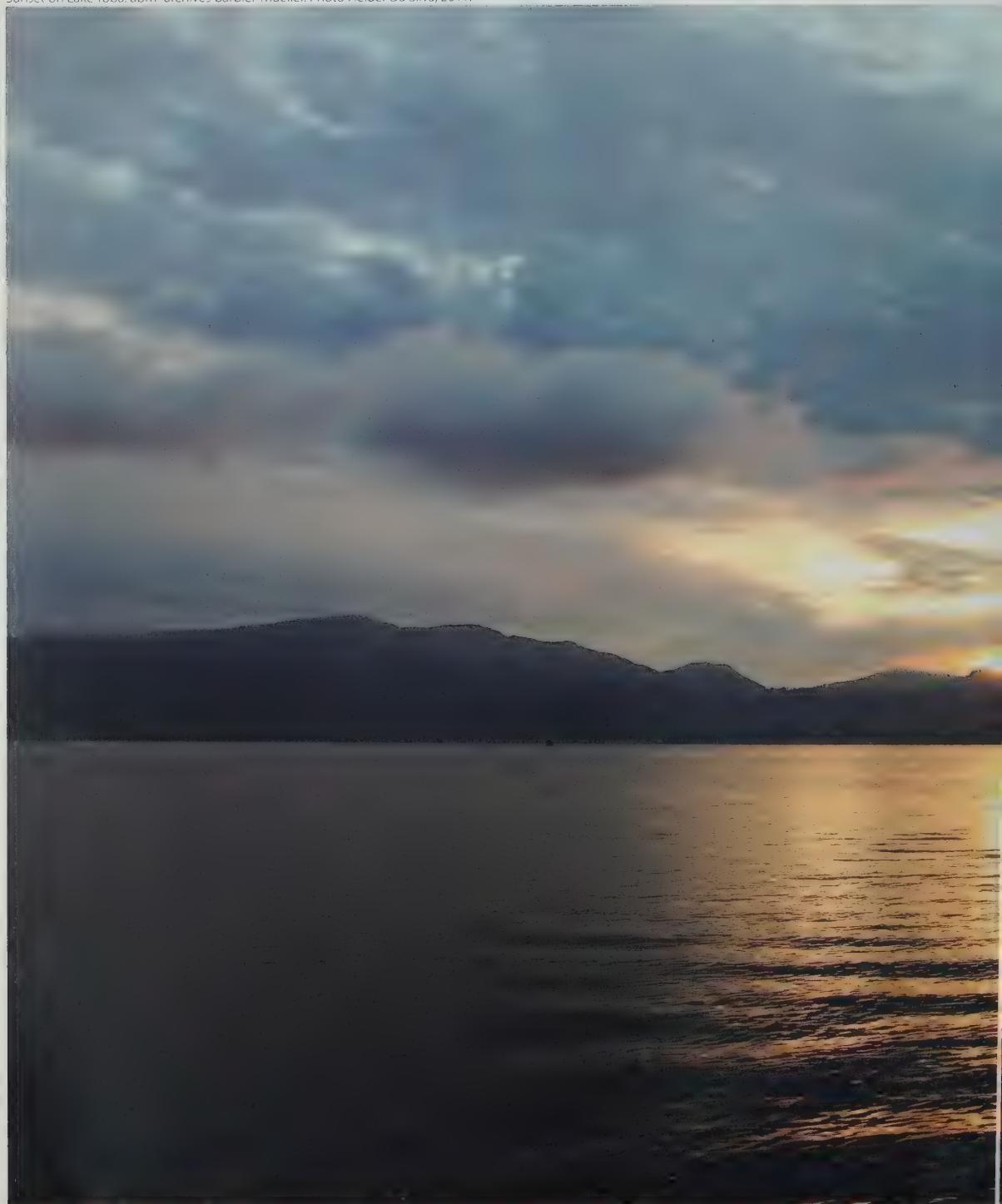
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Sunset on Lake Toba. abm–archives barbier-mueller. Photo Helder Da Silva, 2011.



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Note to the reader:

In Toba as well as in the other Batak idioms, all vowels are pronounced. For example, Huta Hauagong is pronounced "Huta Ha-u-a-gong". Places and names in maps and genealogies are not included.

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The Batak have been known for a long time. The geographer Claudius Ptolemy, without naming them, mentioned their port of Barus, or Baros, on the shores of the Indian Ocean, from which were exported camphor, reputedly the best, and benzoin resin. Marco Polo alluded to these "cannibals" of North Sumatra. Beginning in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, they acquired firearms, raised horses, and traded with Dutch and Portuguese navigators. They invented a written language inspired by Old Javanese, itself derived from Sanskrit. Their villages were independent political entities and were constantly at war with their neighbours, which led to a cannibalism limited to symbolic acts. They are divided into six major groups, with the central group, the Toba, living around the eponymous lake, located over a volcanic crater. The North Karo and the Central Toba have been meticulously studied, but the Western Pakpak have not. One of the five Pakpak subgroups, the Kalasan, have been completely overlooked by ethnology. Between 1974 and 1999, the author made many visits to Sumatra. As a historian, he reconstituted the genealogy of many clans, which allowed him to provide approximate dates for the stone sarcophagi, for example. Between 1985 and 1999, he discovered the Kalasan, and he mentions them in a book published in 1999. He now presents in detail that group of Pakpak, whose five clans were founded by a Toba ancestor in the sixteenth century. From the Pakpak, the Kalasan adopted the practice of cremating the bones of the dead and of constructing stone equestrian effigies of their ancestors. From the Toba, from whom they had separated themselves, even while maintaining neighbourly relations, they retained the *adat*, the customary rule of divine origin. A preliminary study of the Toba's mythology and religion, as well as of their social and political organization, is therefore necessary in order to introduce this little-known people: the Kalasan.